LABOUR IN CHRISTCHURCH:

COMMUNITY AND CONSCIOUSNESS, 1914 - 1919

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TO

ROSE and IVOR PLUMRIDGE

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ABSTRACT

The development of the political labour movement in Christchurch is considered for the period 1914-19. The nature of social stratification in the city is explored. The influence and importance of trade unions, social activity, the prohibition agitation, conscription, inflation and the movement for workers' education are then examined. It is argued that each had an impact on forging the identity of the party by the end of the First World War.

By 1919, Christchurch Labour was a 'class' party, in character and configuration of support from within the community. It drew upon the traditions of an evolving indigenous class consciousness.

PREFACE

When war broke out in August 1914, the political labour movement in Christchurch was weak and disorganised. By the end of 1919, it was strong and victorious: three of New Zealand's eight Labour MPs then came from local electorates. Christchurch had become the country's leading Labour city. The party had here won the allegiance of the working class.

In this thesis, I have attempted to look at how this happened and why. The moderate wing of the New Zealand Labour Party, of which Christchurch labour was a part, has been very little studied. Similarly, regional studies are lacking. For both these reasons, the bulk of the material in this thesis has been assembled from primary sources. However, reliance upon primary sources was also a choice of technique. I deliberately tried to distance myself from what has been written about the course of events at the national level in order to achieve a less pre-determined and perhaps less prejudiced view, of local development. Further, Annual Conferences of the party have been lightly passed over and the evolution of specific policies largely ignored. I have concentrated much more upon events 'on the ground' in Christchurch. It is my belief that the social dimension of the political party, and the kind of public image that it came to acquire were more important in consolidating Labour as the party of the working class in Christchurch.

The experience of 1914-18 does not fully explain the success of 1919. The pre-war era needs more investigation. This is especially true of the events surrounding the collapse of the powerful Christchurch Trades and Labour Council in the wake of the rise of the West Coast-based 'Red' Federation of Labour. The disastrous results of the faction-fighting that took place during these years appears to have had a profound effect

upon the attitudes and strategies of the leaders of the labour movement in Christchurch.

Many people have given me invaluable help over the last two years. I would like to thank all those who gave generously of their time and information in interviews and discussion. Others gave me the benefit of specialist skills. Dr. R. Cant of the Geography Department advised me in the production of the graphs of demographic data. Dr. Nigel Roberts of the Political Science Department provided cheerful and enthusiastic guidance through the maze of computer programming. Ann Orange persevered heroically and competently with a much-manipulated manuscript. Rose Plumridge, Maurice and Valerie Von Tunzleman, Clifford Brown and Colin Curtis gave invaluable assistance with proof reading. Special thanks, however, are due to my supervisor, Dr. Len Richardson, of the History Department. His encouragement and sympathy maintained my motivation, his advice and criticism kept me on course. Without such assistance, this thesis would certainly never have been completed.

CHAPTER I

CHRISTCHURCH: THE EVOLUTION OF A WORKING CLASS COMMUNITY

Chirstchurch was the most paradoxical of New Zealand cities. By the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, it had gained a reputation as a centre of radicalism and vigorous labour politics. Throughout the country, it was looked to as the 'home of militant anti-militarism and socialist activity'.[1] Yet Christchurch had been planned in 1848 as the capital of the Canterbury settlement, a colony intended as an exemplar of an harmonious, hierarchical and conservative society. The Canterbury Association had envisaged a community where colonists could listen without anxiety to the 'din of war, to the tumult of revolutions ... to the struggle of classes, which wear out body and soul in our crowded and feverish Europe'.[2]

The 1840s were a very troubled time in Europe. In Great Britain, there was misery, pauperism and political unrest. Discontent had forced the passage of legislation to reform Parliament and workers had begun to organise politically. The Chartists were active with their demands, in 1847 one of their leaders was elected MP. Elsewhere, the signs were even more ominous. In 1848, there were revolutions throughout Europe, all suppressed with great savagery. Karl Marx and Fredich Engels published the Manifesto of the Communist Party calling for the 'forcible overthrow' of society: 'Let the ruling classes tremble at the communistic revolution. The proletarians have nothing to loose but their

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1. MW, 12 Aug 1914, p.12, c.4
2. W.D. McIntyre and W.J. Gardner [Eds], Speeches and Documents on New Zealand History, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1971, p.2

chains. They have a world to win'.[3]

The Canterbury venture was a response and reaction to this. It was masterminded by Edward Gibbon Wakefield who had devised a theory of colonisation which promised to transplant a complete slice of English society with all elements present 'including the very highest',[4] to flourish in the new land. Karl Marx knew of and attacked Wakefield's theory,[5] but it appealled powerfully to those who were frightened or hemmed in by European developments. The Canterbury Association put great effort into the planning and groundwork of their new colony, and they achieved a very considerable degree of success in implementing the scheme in the way that had been intended. Ironically, this very success was a crucial factor in spawning the condition which helped make the rise of labour politics inevitable.

It was always part of the original intention of the planners of the Canterbury settlement to produce a stratified society. Wakefield had criticised the levelling tendency of other schemes of contemporary colonisation where families arrived, rapidly acquired land and moved out on to an expanding frontier to expend their time and energy in subsistence farming. This might have produced an equalitarian colonial society, but Wakefield saw it not as a step up for the working man, but as a step down for the whole community. Colonists 'inevitably fall back into what is called a primitive state', he declared.[6] Such a result could be avoided Wakefield believed, by the simple expedient of controlling the disposal of land. If land was sold at a 'sufficient

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3. David McLellan, The Thought of Karl Marx. An Introduction. Macmillan Press Ltd., 1977. p.48
4. W.D. McIntyre et al., op.cit., p.2
5. Pappe, H.O. 'Wakefield and Marx; EHR IV (1) 1951, p.88-97, p.89
6. W.D. McIntyre et al., op.cit., p.2

price', newly arrived colonists would be forced to work for wages to earn the necessary sum; this would guarantee a labour force for the wealthy upper class and the capitalist. Business would thus thrive, community life, social gradations and niceties would be preserved. Harmony and hierarchy would prevail.

Determined to implement the plan to the full, the Canterbury Association carefully organised the selection and surveying of the site of Christchurch well in advance of the selection and sale of sections back in England to the intending colonists. Over 1,000 acres were laid out in a grid of wide, symmetrical streets. This was to constitute the central town and was thought at the time to be so vast an area that it would be only sparsely populated for years to come.

As intended, only the wealthy could afford the 'sufficient price' for these town lots. Consequently the well-planned and laid out inner area of the city rapidly became the preserve of the upper class. By the 1870s, the wealthy and professional elite were concentrated in the inner and northern part of the original town area.[7] Large and imposing houses lined Papanui Road, the main outlet from the city to the north, and spread into Merivale and Fendalton, the neighbouring suburbs to the west. The city had taken on a configuration that it was to retain for at least half a century. These areas of inner Christchurch became and remained the most socially desirable in the city, there was very little social decay until well after the First World War.[8] Even by the 1890s they were established as the upper-class suburbs par excellance. In just one street in Fendalton, for instance, there lived two titled families, a professor of the university, the city's chief architect,

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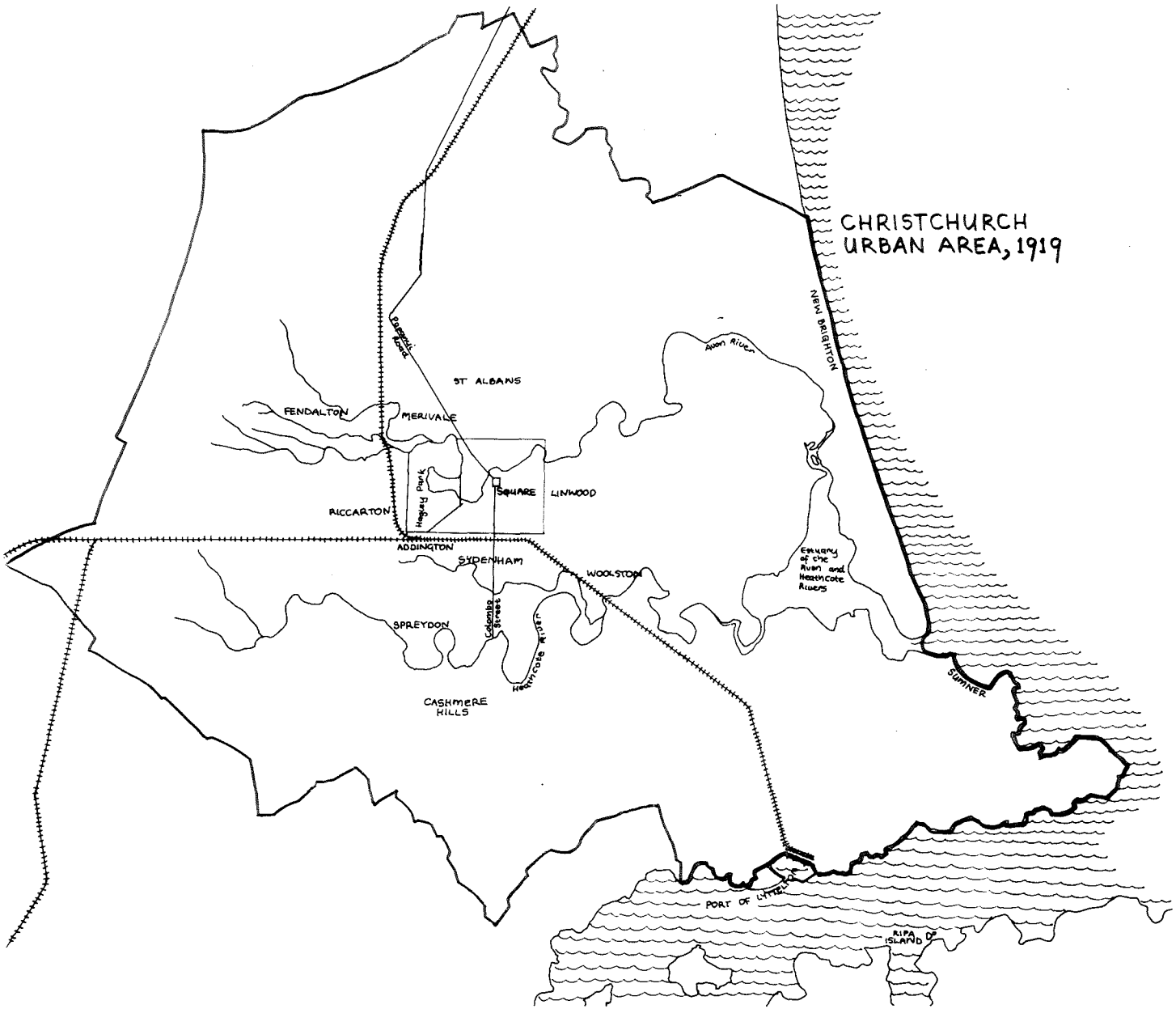
7. Allan Stanley Webster "High status residential areas in Christchurch. Structure and structural change, 1878 to 1973'. Unpublished MA Thesis, University of Canterbury 1975, p. 60

8. Ibid., p.87.


CHRISTCHURCH
URBAN AREA, 1919
NEW BRIGHTON
Avon River
ST ALBANS
Papanui Road
FENDALTON
MERIVALE
Hagley Park
SQUARE
LINWOOD
RICCARTON
ADDINGTON
SYDENHAM
WOOLSTON
Estuary of the Avon and Heathcote Rivers
SPREYDON
Colombo Street
Heathcote River
CASHMERE HILLS
SUMNER
PORT OF LYTTELTON
RIPA ISLAND

and the president of the Chamber of Commerce, who was also the Consular Agent for France.[9]

It was also the most expensive of housing areas in the city by the beginning of the twentieth century. The grandest of the public buildings that Christchurch could boast were also concentrated in the northern half of the original city site - the Provincial Council Chambers, the museum, library, and the oldest of the city's secondary schools, Christ's College, lent grace and the dignity of gothic contours to this upper-class domain. The Avon River meandered gently through the area, and Hagley Park provided space for recreation or sociable ambling in its transplanted English parkland. At least one fond resident of the city had imagined that the beauty of this part of Christchurch would one day be enhanced by the Parliament Buildings of New Zealand, and a grand vice-regal palace.[10]

As the population of Christchurch increased, the wealthy pressed in to areas that were opened up immediately to the west of Fendalton. By the early twentieth century parts of Riccarton were decidedly upper class.[11]

To the south of the city lay the Port Hills; settlement began on the eastern slopes in a subdivision of the Cashmere estate. Tommy Taylor, a popular local politician who first made a name for himself in temperance movements, was the first to open the area up with two friends, the Rev. L.M. Isitt and Hubert Cole. They formed a syndicate and bought up land. The place was at first known as 'Pump Town' in honour of this group of radical Methodist prohibitionists. Attracted by the elevation

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9. Sarah E.W. Penny, Beyond the City. Penny Ash, Christchurch 1977. p.64-7

10. William Pratt, Jubilee Jottings. Canterbury and Incidently New Zealand. A.D. 1900. Being the Lucubrations and Prognostications of a Primitive pilgrim. Christchurch Press Co. Ltd., 1900. p.71-3.

11. See Appendix 1; fig. 1.1

and the view others began to settle there in spite of the fact that conditions were primitive. It was a long time before Cashmere was connected to the sewerage system of the larger city and there was a constant shortage of fresh water. For years it was common politeness to invite Cashmere friends to city homes so they could have a bath.[12] Moreover, communications between the hills and the central city were poor. A great deal of bog-land lay between and it was not until 1911 that trams pushed out to skirt the base of the Port Hills.[13] Nevertheless, because it was both difficult and expensive to build on a hillside section, only the wealthy settled there; by the early twentieth century residents included such prominent men as the Anglican Bishop of Christchurch and the Registrar of Canterbury College, who was also one of the leading businessmen in the city. But the Cashmere settlement remained a small one until after the First World War. In 1905 there were only thirty families in Cashmere[14] and by 1914 the area rivalled the central suburbs, Fendalton and Merivale, in neither size nor status.

There was one other upper class Christchurch suburb, although of a somewhat different character from the others. Sumner had been intended for settlement from the first, but the early excavation of a rail tunnel through the Port Hills to the deep-sea port at Lyttelton made Sumner redundant as a harbour. Instead it became a popular watering place. Even in the 1880s coaches ran six times daily to Christchurch and over a hundred horses were required on the run. Steam trams were running by the 1890s and the service was electrified in 1907.[15] Soon after the turn of the century the holiday residences of the wealthy

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12. Gordon Bryant Ogilvie, The Port Hills of Christchurch. A.H. & A.W. Reed., Wellington, 1978. p.149-158.
13. Ibid., p. 157
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid., p. 27, 28, 31.

began to cover the lofty hills and cliffs at Sumner. Clifton Spur was opened up as a carefully designed experiment of a garden suburb. Each elegant little cottage was placed so as to ensure privacy and yet not interfere with the view of its neighbour. The whole development was declared to be

> the finest marine subdivision that has been or can be offered for sale. It is quite unique. It is close to a beautiful beach and, being on the lower slopes of the hill, it can be reached without fatigue - yet it is high enough to enjoy one of the most beautiful panoramas of beach, estuary, sand-dunes, hills and distant snow-clad mountain ranges ....[16]

In the years immediately before the outbreak of war in 1914, many of the leading businessmen, professionals and academics of Christchurch took up residence on the Sumner hills.[17] Robert McDougall, the manager of Aulsebrooks, who donated an art gallery to the city, had a home there. The cottage of James Joseph Kinsey became the social centre of the famous antarctic expedition of Captain Robert Falcon Scott, in 1910.[18]

Grand and imposing buildings fronted the gentle curve of the

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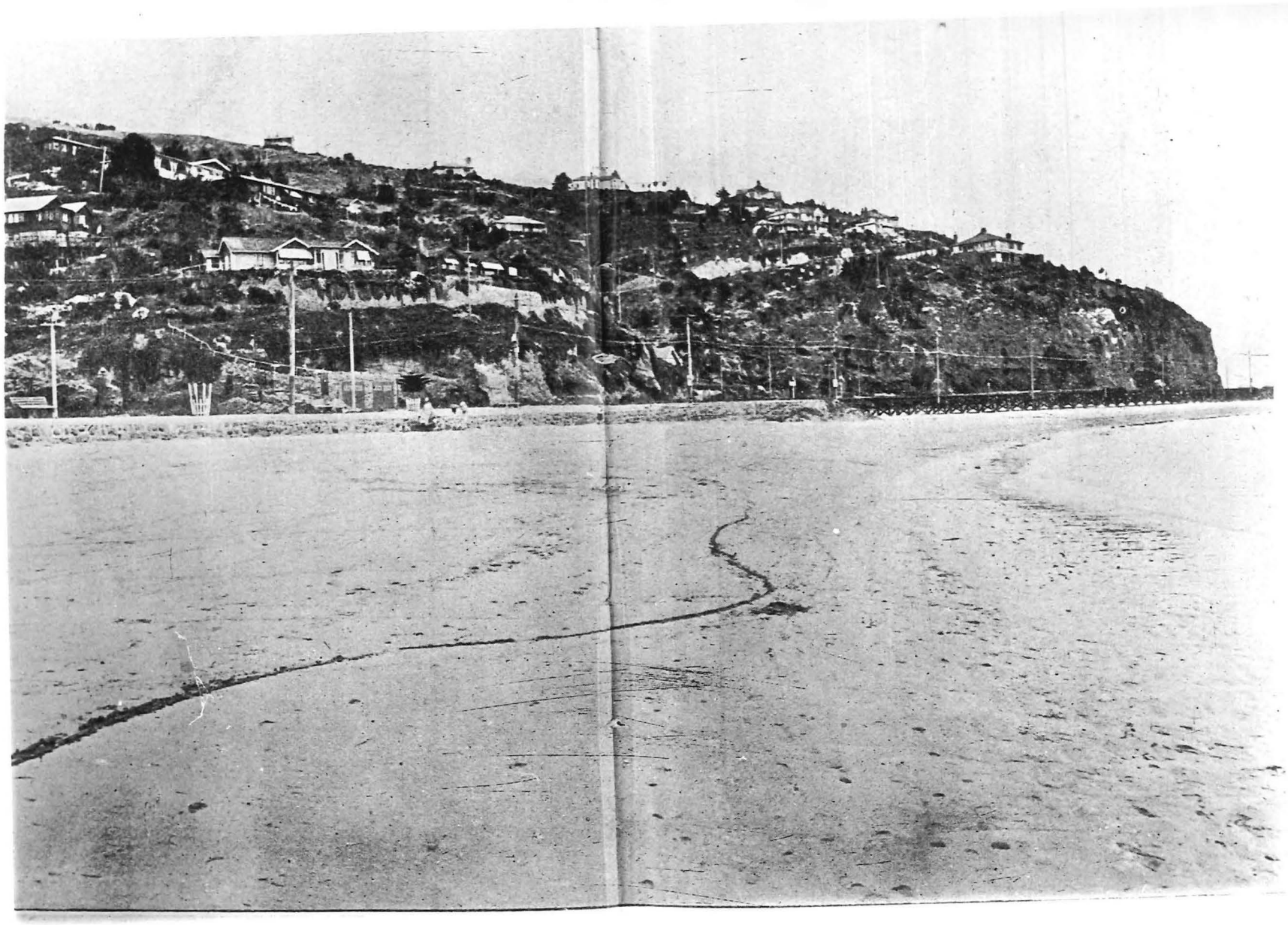
16. Gordon Ogilvie, op. cit. p. 41-2.
17. See Appendix 1; fig. 1.2
18. Ibid., p.42-3. During the First World War, Sumner was still largely a holiday rather than residential area.

Table 1. Habitation of Christchurch Boroughs, 1921

	% Ch-Ch City	% Riccarton	% Woolston	% New Brighton	% Sumner	% Lyttelton
Rented	33.97	23.11	26.88	44.08	37.06	46.26
Rent Free	2.84	2.82	2.29	3.08	3.35	5.14
Owning/ Buying	62.32	73.78	70.37	51.63	58.31	48.48

Source: computed from New Zealand Census 1921 Part XV p. 40



Sumner promenade, but for the most part the housing on the flat land at Sumner was less impressive. Fishermen's cottages huddled together on the spreading mudflats at the base of Redcliffs.

In some respects, the development of Christchurch had satisfied the expectations of its founders; they would have welcomed the evidence that the wealthy and cultured had been encouraged to settle in the city. But in other ways, their scheme had gone astray. The Canterbury Association in 1848 had in fact been engaged in town planning; their design and the restriction on the sale of land had enabled the affluent to readily pre-empt the choice areas. Little thought was given in the Wakefieldian scheme of things to the development of industry. Towns were seen as the abode of 'persons of refined habits and cultivated tastes' who came together to enjoy 'the appliances of civilisation'. The colony had been designed to entice capitalists, but no land had been laid aside in Christchurch on which they were to pursue their business interests or erect their factories.

Nor did Wakefield give serious consideration to the arrival of working people, willing enough perhaps to work for their hire, but at the same time determined to own a plot of land. Yet precisely such people began to arrive as early as the 1860s in substantial numbers. Lancashire cotton operatives, for instance, rendered redundant by cut-backs in British industry at the time of the American civil war then began to reach the city. Such people could not afford the town lots of the planned central area.[19]

The Canterbury Association had designated three kinds of colonial land - urban, suburban and rural. Suburban land lay in a belt outside the original town site and was sold off in 'suburban estates' of a few acrea each. Within a few years, however, these estates were sub divided

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19. Sydenham New Zealand Federation of University Women, Canterbury Branch, Christchurch, 1977. p. 15-6

by their owners. The Lancashire cotton workers moved into land immediately to the south of the city. In recognition of this fact contemporaries dubbed the area 'Lanky Town'.[20] It was later to be known as Sydenham.

The failure of Wakefield and the Canterbury Association to plan for industry and working-class housing did not mean that the city was not effectively zoned. Rather their neglect tended to make social, residential and economic segregation and stratification all the more obvious. The protests of the wealthy elite were at least as effective as prohibitive by-laws. Industry of the more offensive and noisome kind was kept from developing within the pre-empted upper-class areas. There had been a small family owned brewery in the heart of Fendalton in the very early days,[21] and there were flour mills on the Avon River right in the central city. The mill islands can be seen there still.[22]

Both industry and workers were thus forced out of the planned area of the central town, into the suburban land around the outskirts, where growth was rapid and chaotic. Industry grew rapidly after the railway was built in the 1880s. The tracks approached the city from the north-west, skirted the southern boundary then veered off to the south-east piercing the Port Hills through to the harbour at Lyttelton. Sydenham was thus strategically placed, laying directly south of the railway, it was yet still close to the heart of the city while land remained both cheap and plentiful. Raw materials flooded in from the West Coast and the inland plains to be unloaded at the goods sheds lining Carlyle Street, the Sydenham side of the railway tracks. Finished products were loaded back on to the trains for wide dispersal.

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20. Sydenham. New Zealand Federation of University Women, Canterbury Branch, Christchurch, 1977. p. 15.

21. Sarah Penny. Op.cit. p.68.

22. Johannes C. Andersen. Old Christchurch. Christchurch, Simpson and Williams, 1949. p. 318-9, 322.

The area boomed and by the turn of the century, it was perhaps the biggest industrial suburb in New Zealand.

In 1903 Christchurch was the leading iron-working and manufacturing city in the country,[23] although there were signs that this pre-eminence was fast ending. By 1914, there were considerably more factories in Auckland than in Christchurch. Sydenham firms produced a wide variety of goods - hosiery, clothing and pottery were important. Agricultural implements were produced for New Zealand wide dispersal and in some cases goods went even further afield. At least one Sydenham firm by the 1890s had subsidaries in Australia.[24]

As the population expanded, industrial development began to spill into the neighbouring areas. In Waltham, to the east, lime kilns, breweries and pottery works were established. To the west, in Addington, the Railway Workshops was established in 1879. By the turn of the century, they had become the city's largest heavy engineering plant.

Although Sydenham became the city's biggest industrial suburb industry had begun earlier in Woolston which lay between the original town site and the upper navigable reaches of the Heathcote River. In the days before the advent of rail, the Heathcote was a strategic water route for Christchurch and most of the raw materials needed by the city and province were brought in through the quay at Woolston. A number of warehouses were built, as well as a few small lime kilns. Trades associated with the water-route such as ship-building, were carried on along the banks of the river. But the development was small scale. When the railway was driven through, all this changed. New

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23. Joan Patricia Morrison. The Evolution of a City: The Story of the growth of the city and suburbs of Christchurch, the capital of Canterbury, in the years from 1850 to 1903. Christchurch, Christchurch City Council, 1948. p.23-5, 104.

24. Ibid., p.99

industries were established, entirely supplanting the old. Wool scouring, glue and soap-works poured wastes into the river. Tanneries and leather works were thrown up along the railway line; workshops, stock assembly yards and warehouses fronted the tracks. The character of the area had changed - the old industries had been small-scale and slow-paced. The noise and pollution of the new soon drove out the mixed farming-and-dockside community.[25]

By 1914, the industrial suburbs were thus clearly demarcated. The railway tracks confining them in an arc to the south of the original town area, stretching from Addington in the west to Woolston in the east. In stark contrast to the well laid-out and planned spacious area within the Christchurch town belts, building began in these industrial suburbs and mushroomed in an imbroglio of neglect. When development began in the 1880s, there were very few town planning regulations. Developers pushed up buildings and laid down thoroughfares or lanes almost where they pleased. Half-formed and undrained alleys abounded in Sydenham and Woolston.[26] Factories were thrust into the middle of residential lots. Other industries used the backs of old houses or disused buildings which had often been carted from elsewhere and dumped. In the first few years of settlement, there had been some grand houses in Sydenham; when the workers began to enter in the 1860s, homes were modest two-room cottages[27] but there was at least the space, light and air of the sparsely populated plains. After the railway was driven through the situation rapidly worsened. Houses then abutted factories and all were crammed up against the tracks.

The industrial suburbs in Christchurch were inhabited almost exclusively by wage earners. In 1914 there were very few employers of

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25. Joan Morrison, op.cit., p.23-5.
26. Joan Morrison, op. cit., p. 101-2.
27. Sydenham, op.cit., p.9, 12, 15.

labour resident in Sydenham,[28] for instance. But there were also other working-class communities. The port at Lyttelton was a special case. Physically isolated from the rest of the city, it was yet the most decidely working class of all the city's suburbs. It was a typical port town with nearly the entire workforce engaged in maritime trades, services and industries. Waterfront workers made up the largest single group of workers, at the turn of the century about four or five hundred strong. There was also a heavy industry plant, established in the 1880s, and by the First World War carrying out ship repairs, manufacturing pre-fabricated bridges and after 1917 producing diesel engines for coastal steamers. Down on the dockside and slipways, shipwrights, boildermakers and blacksmiths worked on the repair of ships in port.[29] Straggling along the two streets running parallel to the waterfront was a small shopping centre where Lyttelton families ran small businesses to supply the town's needs. Lyttelton, however, was in decline by the early twentieth century. The population had fallen from a peak in the 1880s to just over 3,500 by the outbreak of war[30] and the decline was a continuing one. The school roll fell more than one-sixth between 1910 and 1916.[31] The war itself had a serious impact, sixty locals were killed, more than twice the number claimed in the Second World War.[32]

New Brighton was also a coastal settlement, but very different in character from Lyttelton. It grew up as a holiday resort for those of modest means. But unlike Sumner, the sea-side suburb of lofty cliffs, lovely views and wealthy inhabitants, New Brighton was a bare expanse of

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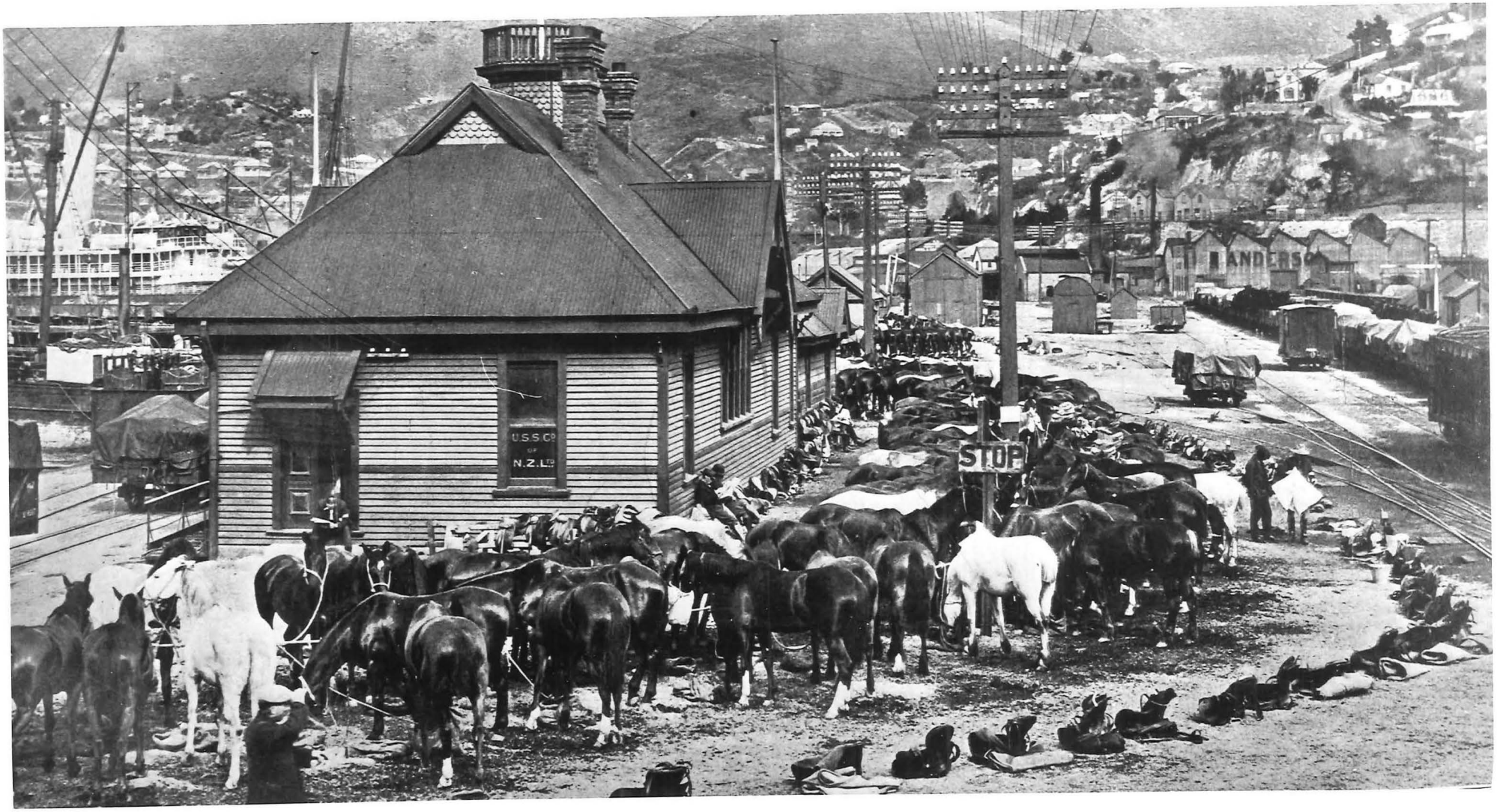
28. See Appendix 1. fig. 1.4.

29. John Johnson. The Story of Lyttelton, 1849-1949. Christchurch, Lyttelton Borough Council, 1952. P.164-8.

30. Ibid., p. 127

31. Ibid.

32. Ibid., Appendix II, III.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flat sand dunes covered in low scrub. Wild pigs were frequently found and until at least the 1880s the area was largely the haunt of those who came to hunt waterfowl and small game. A hotel and a boarding house were built in the late 1870s and a few years later G.T. Hawker, who later served as Mayor and came to be known as the Father of New Brighton, brought in the first four-roomed holiday cottage, setting the pattern of settlement that was to follow.[33] But it was many years even before the sand was anchored through careful planting programmes. Roads remained a hazard; they regularly disappeared, buried by sand carried in the strong wind. The suburb was thriving however, and the population of New Brighton doubled during the First World War to reach 3,864 by 1921,[34] but almost half the houses were still holiday homes rather than permanent residences.[35] Apart from the shops and retail stores there was almost no employment in New Brighton itself, most had to commute daily to work in the city.

As the wealthy consolidated in the north and west of the central city, and as the industrial suburbs spread slowly in the south, a belt of middle class residential housing arose in the north-east. Settlement had been slow in this sector of the city. Much of the land there was forbidding. As late as the 1880s, school children would go just across the east belt of the town into ... the wild area of sandhill, where

> they would make slides down the steep sides of some of the higher dunes. There were a very few houses scattered there, in the midst as it seemed ... of wastes of gorse and broom ... the very edge of wilderness ....[36]

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33. George William Walsh, New Brighton; a regional history 1852-1970, Christchurch, A and C Arts, 1971. p.26; Joan Morrison, op.cit., p.34
34. Census, 1921, General Report, p.22
35. See Table 1, above, p.6
36. Johannes C. Andersen, op.cit., p.279


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In some parts, it was not until the belts of shelter trees had taken firm root that extensive settlement took place.[37] In other parts, even quite close to the central town, flax and raupo swamp prevented development until the late 1900s.[38] Land in St. Albans, the suburb immediately north of the central town belt, had been tied up in trust for the Anglican church.[39] When sales began in 1906, subdivisions and streets were rapidly filled with housing of an intermediate value, catering to the demand of tradesmen and small businessmen, who needed to live near to their workplaces in the central city, but wanted to live away from the industry of the south.

Residential land was cheap in Linwood, the suburb to the east of the city abutting the industrial area of Woolston. Working people settled the area, commuting to work in the nearby factories. By the First World War, there was a thriving community centred on the shopping area at the Stanmore Road-Worcester Street intersection.[40]

During the early twentieth century, the advent of the bicycle made it possible for industrial workers to live outside the immediate area of their employment. At first, the price of bicycles had been prohibitive for all but the wealthy few. The establishment in 1888 of three factories in the city specialising in their production[41] however, saw prices drop and popularity grow. Workers began to press out into the mixed farming-middle-class areas to the south of the consolidated industrial areas. By 1916 suburbs like Spreydon contained both wage earners and self-employed.[42]

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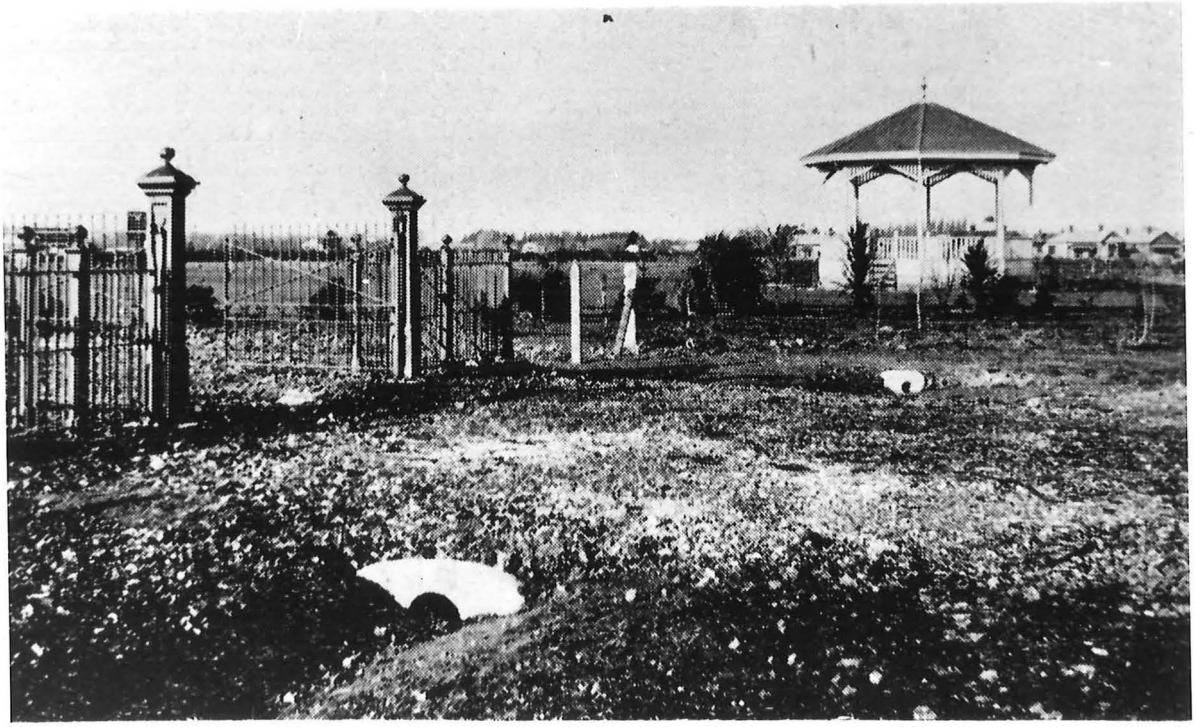
37. Joan Morrison, op.cit., p.32
38. Ibid.
39. Ibid., p.72
40. Ibid., p.74
41. Sarah Penny, op.cit., p.63
42. See Appendix 1; fig. 1.3



Thus on the fringes of the city, and in the areas that were newly developing, Christchurch contained communities of a broad occupational mix.

Nevertheless, in the city as a whole, residential and occupational segregation was much less fluid. By the outbreak of the First World War, two communities inhabited Christchurch: an upper class, centred on the north-western suburbs of the central city and beginning to consolidate on the Port Hills to the south and in the sea-side resort of Sumner; and a working class, occupying the established industrial areas and their immediate environs, as well as New Brighton and the port at Lyttelton.

Modes of life were quite different within these two communities. Each had its own pattern of recreation, religious observance and social interaction. Aspirations differed, as can be seen in the way educational achievement varied between the upper and lower class areas of the city. Predictably, proportionately more residents of the wealthy area had secondary and tertiary education. In the working class areas, people were more likely to have had only primary school education, although there were considerable numbers with at least some kind of technical training.[43] As grooming for later life, these differences in educational levels revealed the different hopes and intentions of upper and lower class people. It also demonstrated considerable lack of mobility; few workers escaped from the working class through technical education.

The wealthy upper class areas of Fendalton, Merivale and parts of Riccarton were self-contained, inward-looking and closely-knit, elite communities. Friendships between families were strong, intermarriage in some cases almost traditional.[44] The children grew up together,

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43. See Appendix 1; figs 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4.

44. A good example of traditions of intermarriage can be seen in the history of the Evans family, and that of John Henry Fisher, the founder of the firm of art dealers which is still under family control. See Sarah Penny, op.cit., p.75-6, for these examples. The book abounds with such evidence however.

playing on the banks of the small streams that wound through the area before draining into the Avon River. In the early days they hunted the small game that flourished in Hagley Park or watched and imitated the soldiers who used to drill there.[45] Sons followed fathers into family firms, after education at private primary schools and Christ's College.[46]

Conditions were quite different for children of the working class. In contrast to the large and stately homes of the wealthy, workers lived in small cottages, many of which were substandard. In the early days of settlement in Sydenham, the area had been under the control of a farmer-dominated Road Board, largely indifferent to the development of the nascent urban suburb within its jurisdiction.[47] Building had in consequence been haphazard. When the Sydenham was incorporated into a borough under the control of a council with local control, things improved. Streets were widened and building took place in a more controlled and regulated fashion. The appearence of the whole area smartened. By the turn of the century, Colombo Street the main road running directly south from the central city, through Sydenham to the Port Hills had become a worthy 'business thoroughfare' where dreary and derelict lots had given place to 'handsome shops and dwellings, while old buildings have been pulled down or so improved that it is difficult to trace those that existed at the inception of the Borough.'[48]

But behind this trim facade, much of the housing was still inferior. Even in the 1930s Sydenham was recognised as being one of the poorest Anglican parishes in the whole of Canterbury. The daughter of the Anglican vicar remembered that from her upstairs bedroom, only one

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45. Sarah Penny, op.cit., p.73
46. Ibid., p.75-6, eg. Henry Fisher, and passim.
47. Joan Morrison, op.cit., p. 108
48. Sydenham, op.cit., p.43

other two-storey house could be seen.[49] The rest were small and huddled cottages. During the First World War, the housing situation in Christchurch deteriorated rapidly. In 1916 over 7,500 of the city's people were living in conditions officially regarded as overcrowded. By 1921 the number was 10,000.[50] This at a time when the population of the whole of the urban area was 105,670.[51]

The industrial suburbs tended to be more cosmopolitan than the upper-class areas, where links were mainly with Britain. Most of the settlers in Fendalton and Merivale had arrived on one of the first four ships, or soon after, from England. Contacts with the mother country remained close for many years as families frequently sent their sons back to further their education or professional careers.[52] The origins of the working-class communities were more diverse: 'Sydenham was a cosmopolitan community', recalled one elderly resident. 'I remember, for instance, a Greek fisherman, a Scottish tailor and an Irish handsom-cab driver near us ...'[53]

> Moreover, the very poor were not uncommonly seen.
>
> ... The little French tramp with rosy cheeks and his crooked walking-stick was a familiar sight on Sydenham streets ... he had flax bowyangs on his trouser legs and his ragged clothes were tied together with flax: he ofter had newspaper tied across his shoulders for warmth.[54]

Working-class children were used to cramped quarters, and familiar with the sight and feel of deprivation. Unlike the children of Fendalton

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49. Sydenham, op.cit., p.89.
50. Census, 1921, part XV, p. 16-7.
51. Ibid., Part I, p. 16. See map for Urban Area. It included large expanses of rural land.
52. Sarah Penny, op.cit., p. 73. Eg. George Harper, fourth son of Bishop Harper.
53. Sydenham, op.cit., p. 85.
54. Ibid., p. 91.

they had no large expanse of gracious park land to romp in; instead they played in vacant and abandoned residential lots. In Sydenham, Smart's Pond was popular - a water filled shingle pit that covered five acres. Before the city Council began to use it as a rubbish dump, shags and swans were attracted to its still waters and the children of the area went punting and fishing.[55]

Formal sports also differed. Some of the city's first tennis, rowing and golf clubs were founded by Fendalton residents. Membership fees excluded workers' participation. It would have cost a working woman two weeks wages to join a golf club in the early 1900s when the sport was first opened up to women. Only the wives of wealthy men could play such games. Tennis and croquet however, were the accepted sports of upper class women.[56] Men played polo and owned and raced their own horses. Pupils from Christ's College provided the backbone of provincial teams in cricket and rugby.[57] In contrast, the industrial areas became the stronghold of rugby league. In the years immediately before the outbreak of war in 1914, League throve at the expense of rugby.[58] The first game of the new code was played in September 1912 and in the following season, Sydenham provided the first club champion in a competition of four clubs.

Until 1919 the suburb won every championship competition in Canterbury.[59] In 1915 a Canterbury representative League side played

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55. Sydenham, op.cit., p.63

56. Canterbury Women Since 1893. Regional Womens Decade Committee, 1975-1985, Christchurch, New Zealand, Pegasus Press, p. 23-24.

57. Sarah Penny, op.cit., Riccarton School was also renowned for its supremacy in rugby. In 1917 it won its grade without its line being crossed, p. 114. And see Reg Carlton p. 115, R.J.S. Harman p. 71 and Arthur Jamieson p. 74.

58. Sydenham, op.cit., p.65

59. Bernard Wood [Ed.] Rugby League Annual 1977. Air New Zealand, Wellington, 1977. p.91.

its first game, against a team of Blackball miners.[60] League was in origin a peculiarly working class sport. Hockey was also very popular among both men and women in the working class suburbs of Christchurch. It was the game at the time considered most suitable for women.[61] No other hockey club in Australasia has such a long, continuous record as Sydenham.[61a]

A number of the city's politicians made popular bases for themselves in the working class areas, partly through their involvement in sport. Dr. H.T.J. Thacker, the Liberal Member of Parliament for Christchurch East During the First World War, was an enthusiast of League. He went as manager with the 1913 New Zealand League team which toured Australia[62] and donated a trophy, the Thacker Shield, which is still each year competed for by Canterbury and West Coast teams.[63] Tommy Taylor, the darling of the prohibition movement which began and consolidated in Sydenham, was one of the earliest sponsors of hockey in Christchurch. He was the first vice-president of the Sydenham Hockey Club in 1889.[64]

By the First World War, the working class suburbs had become strongholds also of nonconformism. In 1860, the Free Methodists had built Sydenham's first church.[65] In 1869, the Wesleyan Methodists had purchased land for their church and by 1878 an imposing stone edifice was completed.[66] Other nonconformists were soon active. The Salvation Army entered the fray in 1881, when the "first assault, or preliminary skirmish was made by a detachment of 'soldiers' ... with an attendance of 1,000".[67] The Baptists were active

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60. GRH, 16 June 1915
61. Canterbury Women, op.cit., p.24
61a. Sydenham, op.cit., p.65
62. Bernard Wood, op.cit., p.36
63. Ibid., p.28
64. Sydenham, op.cit., p.65
65. Ibid., p.80
66. Ibid., p.80
67. Ibid., p.81

at about the same time, but they got off to a slow start and did not consolidate support in the city until just after the end of the war, in 1919.[68] Their success then was due to the arrival of a new leader for their congregation, J.K. Archer. He was an energetic and dynamic organiser, with an interest in social problems and politics as a means of ameliorating living conditions. He entered Labour Party politics during the war and stood for Parliament in Invercargill, shortly before coming to Christchurch. Once established in the city, he became a force in local Labour politics also and in 1926 became the first Labour Mayor of Christchurch.

Like the Baptists, the Presbyterians had a long slow start in the city and their fortunes were retrieved by the energy of a single individual. A Presbyterian church had been built in Sydenham in 1880, but as late as 1905 a church leader wrote tersely of the situation: 'No manse, no missionary organisation, membership 30, stipend 50.'[69] All this changed when Charles Murray arrived in 1906. A political and social activist, Murray revitalised and reorganised the congregation. By 1919, there was a comfortable manse and a Sunday school role of 212. More importantly, church membership had quadrupled and the congregation was 'united and well organised.'[70] At least part of the reason for Murray's success was his ready involvement with the social concerns of his parishoners and his fearlessness in pursuing his objectives. This was especially so in the area of compulsory military training. His ardent opposition won considerable support from within the labour movement and prefigured the contact and co-operation that endured throughout the war when attention shifted to resistance to conscription.[71]

The founders of Canterbury had intended to establish the Anglican

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68. Sydenham, op.cit., p.82
69. Ibid., p.79
70. Ibid., p.80
71. See Chapter 4, below.

Church in their colony; the plan was supported by the first leaders of the settlement and land was laid aside in Addington for the erection of an Anglican church as early as 1860. However, the denomination made little headway among workers, a start was not even made on construction until the late 1870s and even then finances were shaky for many years and congregations were very small - frequently not more than one or two people attending services. It was not until the turn of the century and the appointment of W.S. Bean as minister that the situation improved. However, the improvement was due at least as much to Bean's connections among the wealthy elite and the support he was able to elicit from the leisured ladies of his acquaintance, as to any growth of allegiance among the workers.[72]

This was again a marked contrast to the upper class areas. In Fendalton St. Barnabas, the Anglican church, was a centre of community involvment. Many of the city's leading businessmen and professionals were also prominent lay leaders of the Anglican Church in Christchurch, and stalwarts in the organisation and day-to-day running of the Anglican Cathedral, the architectural centre-piece of the city in the Square.[73]

By 1914 in Christchurch, the physical and cultural separation of the classes was thus well advanced. The intentions of the planners of the settlement had to this extent misfired, since their plan had directly contributed to the result. However, if the way that Christchurch was founded ensured the rise of a vigorous working class culture, the manner in which it developed ensured that the working class would be moderate and reformist in character. If wealth and privilege were entrenched, workers were nevertheless given hope and scope for self-improvement. There was little reality in the dream of an impoverished

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72. Sydenham, op.cit., p.76-8

73. See Sarah Penny, op.cit. Evidence abounds throughout the book, see especially the Fendalton-Riccarton family histories, eg. William Jamieson, p. 74 and R.J.S. Harman, p. 71.

immigrant to get rich quick. As Wakefield had promised, however, the prospect of achieving at least a modest existence was open to many.

First and foremost, home ownership was an attainable goal. This was, of course, true of New Zealand generally, but Christchurch attained a higher level of home ownership than the other main centres.[74] In part this may simply reflect the ease and cheapness with which land could be subdivided and homes built in the 'city of the plains'. In the main cities of the North Island built on hills where usable land was at a premium, it would have been a different matter. However, there was also a distinct feeling in Christchurch that people had a right to own a home of their own and there was considerable popular opposition to tennements and rack-renting. When one developer tried to build tennements in Sydenham similar to those of the industrial north of England, the City Council promptly stepped in and put a stop to his enterprise. It was believed that the people had left England to escape just such conditions; the council was not going to foster them here.[75]

In all parts of Christchurch, not just the upper-class suburbs,[76]

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74. Table 2. Tenure of Dwellings, Four Main Cities, 1921

	Auckland %	Wellington %	Christchurch %	Dunedin %
Renting	49.13	49.14	34.26	40.61
Buying/owning	47.64	49.31	62.87	55.97

Source: Computed from figures, NZ Census 1921, Part XV, p.12

75. Sydenham, op. cit., p.14

76. Table 3. Tenure of Dwellings, Christchurch Boroughs, 1921

	Ch-Ch City %	Riccarton %	Woolston %	New Brighton %	Sumner %	Lyttelton %
Renting	33.97	23.11	26.88	44.08	37.06	46.26
Rent free	2.84	2.82	2.29	3.08	3.35	5.14
Owning/ Buying	62.32	73.78	70.37	51.63	58.31	48.48

Source: Computed from figures, NZ Census 1921, Part XV, p.40.

home-ownership was high although there was understandably more renting in the holiday areas of Sumner and New Brighton. The quality and scale of the building may have been more modest in Woolston than Fendalton for instance, but the fact remains that most working-class families in Christchurch were able to own a home of their own, something that could not be said of the workers in the main centres of the North Island.

The only exception to the pattern of high levels of home ownership within Christchurch was Lyttelton. Here, nearly half the people rented, less than half owned property. In a port town this was to some extent understandable; large numbers of people would be drifting through, staying only as long as it took to get a berth on the next ship. Nevertheless, the large numbers of rented houses contributed to the atmosphere of the port; people living in homes owned by others frequently have only a limited interest in the condition and upkeep of those properties; no doubt many of the ill-kempt and tended gardens and yards of Lyttelton were those of rented cottages.

The port was unique in other ways also. Physical separation from the rest of Christchurch had helped create an isolated and inward looking community. During the First World War, Lyttelton was still largely cut off by the Port Hills, although commuting through the rail tunnel was becoming more common. There was very little flat land in the town. The workers houses perched on the steep hillsides that rose immediately above the docks. It was the cold side of the Port Hills; bush and mist clung to the rocky peaks above the town and in winter the sun never reached some houses. Frost lay white and thickening day after day. In such circumstances, people looked to each other for warmth and comfort. The small community supported seven lodges, one exclusively for women, a seamen's institute and a club. The Boy Scouts, known as the Sea Scouts after 1919 flourished and in 1917 a branch of the Young Women's Christian

Association was established for girls. A number of church groups were active, in particular the Salvation Army was in its heyday between 1914 and 1916. It had endured hard times: for years a mocking 'Skeleton Army' had jeered at the faithful congregations, pelting them with offal and dead cats.[77] Life was often brash in the port. There were a large number of hotels, considerably more than now and the quayside was often littered with beer, blood and broken bottles after closing time.

Therefore, although Lyttelton was indeed the most distinctively working-class suburb of Christchurch by 1914 its physical isolation limited its influence; if the community developed great internal strength and cohesion, it remained during the war substantially cut off from the larger working class community of the city as a whole. It was an appendage, not near the heart and as such played only a minor role in the development of working class politics.

The strength of the aspiration for home-ownership by workers in Christchurch gave a hint of the character that those politics would take on. The trend demonstrated that the workers were bent on self-improvement and committed to their city and society. A home represents an investment; home owners thus had a stake in the community and an interest in securing its continued progress and development. It was not easy to own property. Wage earners had to struggle to save the necessary sum. Consequently they did not want the kind of politics that would lead to a revolution that might in turn deprive them of their hard-won achievement. The working people of Christchurch were overwhelmingly committed to the politics of reform, not revolt.

Demographic structure underpinned this social and political stability. By the early years of the twentieth century, the city's

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77. John Johnson, op.cit., p.179-208.

inhabitants were probably the least heterogeneous and the most settled, of any main centre in New Zealand. By 1914, the population was less cosmopolitan.

The last big influx of settlers to Canterbury had arrived in the 1870s and 1880s under early schemes of assisted immigration.[78] By the end of that period, all potentially productive agricultural land had been taken up and a pattern of land settlement was laid down that did not alter until the 1930s.[79] There was comparatively little immigration to New Zealand in the last two decades of the nineteenth century, all assisted immigration was cut for a time when the depression of the 1880s and 1890s was at its worst.[80] When the tide of immigration again began to flow in the twentieth century, the North Island received most of the flood.[81] Canterbury's foreign-born became an ageing element in the population. Those who did immigrate to the province almost invariably settled in the city itself. In the rural areas the numbers of foreign-born dropped dramatically as elderly people died.[82] By 1916 73.6% of Canterbury's population outside Christchurch was native born. In Christchurch the proportion was lower - 67.2%,[83] but this was still higher than that of any other New Zealand city.[84]

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78. Andrew Hill Clark, The Invasion of New Zealand by People, plants and Animals. Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, 1949. p.127
79. J.S. Duncan "The Distribution of Population in North Canterbury', unpublished MA thesis, University of Canterbury, 1947. p.67
80. Census, 1921, General Report, p.54
81. Andrew Clark, op.cit., p.127
82. Table 4. Foreign-born in Canterbury

	Christchurch % change 1911-1921	Extra-metropolitan Canterbury % change 1911-1921
English	+2.15	-14.7
Scottish	-10.9	-12.0
Irish	-4.4	-25.3

Source: computed from figures, NZ Census 1911-1921

83. Census, 1916, Part III
84. See Appendix 1. Fig. 3.1 - 3.4

As well as being fewer in number, the foreign-born population of Christchurch was more homogeneous. People of British stock had always made up the bulk of immigrants to New Zealand, but there were some differences in the national origins of those arriving in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In the 1870s and 1880s, immigrants to Canterbury had been overwhelmingly English and Irish.[85] After this time, the numbers of Irish coming to New Zealand fell away. At the turn of the century the Irish made up 5.6% of New Zealand's population. Twenty years later, they were less than half that proportion. In Canterbury, the Irish were the second largest immigrant group in 1911, but by 1921 they were outnumbered by the Scots.[86] In the city itself, there were still over three thousand Irish in 1921,[87] but they were an ageing, declining island of population left by the ebb of the immigrant tide after the 1880s.

The English were always the largest single group. They were also the group closest in culture to the native-born Europeans. Even in 1916, the fathers of about half the latter in New Zealand were English.[88] In Christchurch the English were nearly 16,000 strong during the First World War - three or four times as numerous as either the Scots or the Irish.[89] The Australian connection had always been strong; the desire of New Zealanders to take a holiday to Sydney at

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85. Andrew Clark, op.cit., p.127.

86. Table 5. Foreign born in Christchurch

	1911	1921
English	15,843	16,184
Scottish	3,267	3,623
Irish	3,341	3,093

Source: computed from figures, Census 1911, 1921

87. See table 5.

88. Andrew Clark, op.cit., p.148, Table XV

89. See Table 5.

least once in their life had long been noted.[90] During the twentieth century, Australians made up an increasing proportion of all immigrants to New Zealand, but most went to the North Island. Large numbers were attracted by the prospect of becoming small-farm holders on land being broken in in the north.[91] However of New Zealand cities during the war Wellington had the greatest number of Australian ex-patriates, and Christchurch the least. A fact of some significance, given the critical role of Australians in the formation of the Labour Party in 1916.

By the outbreak of war in 1914, most of the city's immigrants had been settled in Christchurch for many years. They were well assimilated in general, and frequently elderly. The number of so-called 'race aliens' was especially low in Christchurch, and the Maori population was very small.[92] In a city such as this, where the inhabitants were homogeneous, well assimilated and minority groups under-represented, racial, nationalist and associated religious tensions could be expected to play only a small role. It is significant that the local Irish population took little part in the nation-wide agitation about events in Ireland during the war. In 1917, after the Dublin uprising and its savage repression by the British, the Maoriland Nationalist Association was formed and branches were set up throughout New Zealand, in most main towns and all the main cities except Christchurch.[93] The twentieth century nationalism of the Sinn Fein did not mean much to the Irish of the city, most of whom had left the shores of their native country at

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90. Arnold Rollo, 'Some Australasian Aspects of New Zealand Life, 1890-1913'. NZJH 4(1) 1970, p.55

91. Ibid., p.59-60

92. 18 'race aliens' per 10,000 Europeans. Census, 1921, Part XV, p.5. 100 Maoris lived at Rapaki, a reserve near Lyttelton. Census, 1921, Maori Census, p.viii; and L.D.B. Heenan, 'The Changing South Island Maori Population'. NZ Geog. 22(2) 1966, p.125-165

93. GR 1 Feb 1917, p.48, c.2

least forty years earlier. They had had time to thoroughly assimilate; New Zealand concerns were now much more relevent to them than events in Ireland.

Nor did organisations which throve on religious sectarianism sink roots in Christchurch. The Protestant Political Association which was established to combat imagined threats from the Catholic influence in New Zealand received little support in Canterbury. The Catholic Church was weak in the province, Anglicans were little interested in this brand of sectarianism and some of the leading Methodist clergy were vigorously opposed to the P.P.A.[94]

Not only was the population of Christchurch more indigenous and more homogeneous than those of the other New Zealand cities, its age structure was older. There were disproportionately large numbers of people over 65, and disproportionately few under 35.[95] This was another factor underpinning social stability. The population was weighted with large numbers of middle-aged and elderly people, most of whom had worked hard and satisfied their ambitions, at least to the extent of achieving the comfort and security of their own home. Such people looked forward to their retirements with some degree of expectation, reassured by the prospect of old age pensions, a scheme introduced by the Liberal government of Richard John Seddon in 1898. It was not fertile ground for the spread and growth of radical doctrine quite unlike the West Coast mining towns where radicalism indeed took deep root. In stark contrast to the population of Christchurch, West Coast mining towns tended to contain large numbers of highly mobile young people. Older miners settled, deciding that this job was the end of the road and that they should raise a family in an environment of some stability. The

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94. Harold S. Moores, 'The Rise of the Protestant Political Association sectarianism in New Zealand Politics during World War 1' Unpublished MA Thesis, University of Auckland, 1966. p.225-226.

95. See Appendix 1; fig. 3.1 - 3.4.

young had no such roots and were perhaps more likely than the young people of Christchurch to lend an ear to radical doctrine.[96]

Nor was the economy of Christchurch ever subject to the strains of a single industry town. There was variety of employment; if workers knew that they would always have to work for a wage, they also knew that they could follow inclination and ability within one of the multitude of trades and services that were carried on in Christchurch. By the middle of the First World War, more than 27,500 people in Christchurch were wage earners; three thousand men were transport workers, two thousand were construction workers and between ten and eleven thousand men and women were employed in the city's factories.[97] In 1914, with over 1,200 factories, Christchurch was second only to Auckland among New Zealand cities, but many of the factories in Christchurch were small. Nearly half employed on average fewer than five people and two-thirds employed fewer than ten.[98]

Lyttelton was exceptional in having several hundred men concentrated into one work-place - but even in that town, variety existed. In Christchurch itself, the biggest factories were the Kaiapoi Woollen Mills, with 261 employees (nearly half of them women), the Addington Railway Workshops and the three city abbattoirs, employing just under 1,000 men in total.[99] Food processing, textiles and clothing trades absorbed almost half the entire workforce in Christchurch and in these trades factories were typically small with seldom more than twenty workers and frequently only one or two.[100]

There was thus variety, and room for improvement within the working class, since wages differed both within and across trades and

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96. See Len Richardson 'Class Community and Conflict': the Blackball Miners' Union 1920-1932', forthcoming.

97. Census, 1916, Part IX, computed from figures p.144-5

98. AJHR, 1915, H-11, Labour Report, p.28-9

99. Ibid.

100. Ibid.

occupations. At the top of the wage hierarchy was a small group of highly skilled tradesmen, precision toolmakers and optical goods makers for instance, who often worked either alone, or accompanied by a solitary apprentice. Gas and electricity plant workers, about 100 in all, earned comparable rates of pay, somewhere in excess of £150 per annum. The next most highly paid factory workers were skilled tradesmen such as printers, carpenters, cabinet-makers and joiners. Such men earned about £100 per annum. Men in some branches of engineering were also well paid, between £105 and £120, although they probably worked somewhat longer hours than most skilled tradesmen.

In food processing, clothing and textiles, wages were generally lower: some meatworkers earned over £100, but many got less. In other branches of food processing, such as baking-powder manufacture, biscuit and confectionary production wages ranged from £75 to £85 a year.[101]

Some of the best paid employment for men lay outside the factories. Waterfront work, shipping, and cargo-working were among the highest paid industries in New Zealand[102] but direct comparison with the take home pay of factory workers is difficult, because men in these industries worked very irregular hours.[103]

There was to be little change in this wage hierarchy during the war. Nominal wage rates rose considerably, but the relative positions of the industries remained the same. Printing, building and engineering, along with shipping and cargo-working remained the best paid industries. Clothing, textiles, bootmaking and domestic service, the poorest. However, there was some narrowing of the gap between the best and worst

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101. AJHR, 1915, H-11, Labour Report, p.28-9; Computed from figures

102. John Child, 'Wages Policy and Wage Movements in New Zealand, 1914-1923'. JIR 13 (1971). p.173

103. G.W. Clinkard, 'Wages and Working Hours in New Zealand, 1897-1923'. Year Book, 1919, p.931, p.929 re seamen.

paid industries, although no narrowing of the margin for skill within industries. Indeed, in trades like meat working and woollen milling, the margin actually widened.[104]

Most working class women probably worked in paid employment for at least some part of their lives, but the attitude of the community towards female employment was conservative, and the opportunities for women were limited. The home was considered woman's first sphere of duty. New Zealand women aspired to marriage, and few married women were in paid employment.[105] Nevertheless, by the middle of the First World War, over 8,000 women in Christchurch were earning their own living in some capacity. There were about three and a half thousand factory workers, and a further fifteen hundred women were engaged in domestic service,[106] almost the poorest paid of all possible occupations. But most women in the workforce were young. By 1921 36% of all women in the New Zealand workforce were under 21 and 56% were under 25.[107] It was not considered possible that women should be the main breadwinners for families. Wages for women in all trades were low. In Christchurch rates for females were lowest in occupations like laundry work and domestic service, but in all trades they were lower than rates for men. The average wage in food processing and clothing industries was low, partly because of the large numbers of women attracted into such trades. By 1919 female woollen mill workers and bootmakers received about half the wage of their male counterparts.[108] Large numbers of women had gone into the labour force during the war. They largely replaced men in food processing and clothing, but there had been no necessary improvement in the rates of pay for women. Female cooks, for instance, advanced from

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104. John Child, op.cit., p.173
105. Census, 1916, part IX, p.144-5
106. Ibid.
107. Census, 1921
108. G.W. Clinkard, op.cit., p.919, 921

53% of the male rate in 1914, to 68% by 1922, but tailoresses slipped from 55% to 49% during the same period.[109]

Some occupations were regarded as especially suitable for women by the time of the First World War, notably nursing and teaching. But conditions were poor in these also. Trainee nurses, for instance, were 'notoriously ill-paid'[100] at the rate of £12 per year, and until 1918, a qualified nurse of six years experience earned no more than £80. In teaching, the situation at first sight appeared rather better. Men and women were paid at the same rates, depending upon the grade they had achieved within their profession. But there was no equality. By convention, women were not appointed to positions that would warrant their rising above a certain grade; in other words, men occupied the top positions and salaries. Women made up the rank-and-file. By the end of the war, the average wage for male teachers was £222-15-0d; for women it was £135.[111]

Employment opportunities for women were therefore somewhat bleak, and their opportunities limited. However, those prospects and possibilities were at least as good and as broad as was considered 'proper' for women at the time. Men of the working class had greater scope; variety and margin for skill offered them the chance of change, and self-improvement up to a point; if most wage earners could not hope to raise themselves into the class of the elite, they could measure their advance against their peers.

Christchurch by 1914 had spawned a distinctive working class. In many respects, it was conservative, but not acquiescent. Social and

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109. John Child, op.cit., p.173

110. Stella Robinson "Women in New Zealand. A contribution to the History of the part played by Women in the Colonization and Development of the Dominion', unpublished M.A. Thesis, Canterbury College, Christchurch, 1919. p.74

111. Ibid., p.73-4

residential stratification was too obvious and pervasive for that. Working people lived in conspicuous industrial suburbs, which were frequently below the standards of the rest of the city in planning and facilities and presented an especially marked contrast to the suburbs of the elite, which were sheltered and graceful enclaves of grand and imposing buildings. Working class culture was separate from that of the upper class. In interests, recreational pursuits and religious observance, workers fulfilled themselves in ways quite different and apart from the businessmen and professionals of the city. Workers were aware of these divisions; they knew their interests were distinct, and at times opposed to those of their employers and masters.

Conditions were ripe for the growth of a strong political party to express and fulfil the needs of this self-aware and at the same time self-confident working class. This was to be made abundantly clear with the formation of the Social Democratic Party in 1913.

CHAPTER II

THE POLITICAL LABOUR MOVEMENT AND THE TRADE UNIONS

The Social Democratic Party was a new phenomenon in New Zealand politics. It was born in 1913, out of the widespread desire within the New Zealand labour movement for unity of expression and organisation in politics and industry. Rivalry had been endemic and self-destructive as moderates, who favoured arbitrationist tactics, fought with militants, who had come to favour direct action, partly influenced by syndicalist theories brought in from the United States. The moderate wing of the labour movement had been busy throughout 1912 with a campaign for unity; it began to look as if success was within their grasp and the militants were consequently anxious not to be out-manoeuvred. They issued an invitation for joint discussion. Moderates responded enthusiastically and a Unity Congress met in Wellington in January 1913. It was there decided to establish two structures for labour throughout New Zealand. The Social Democratic Party was to be the political organisation, and the United Federation of Labour the industrial organisation of New Zealand workers. The Congress adjourned to allow for full discussion of these moves throughout the country, but when delegates met again in July 1913, the SDP and the UFL were confirmed in their existence.

In Christchurch, the SDP took root quickly. The municipal elections of April 1913 was fought under the banner of the SDP,[1] even although the party had not been yet confirmed in its formal existence. At the end of the year the party successfully fought a parliamentary by-election, thus boasting one of only two SDP Members of Parliament in the country. By the outbreak of war in 1914, Christchurch was a national stronghold of the SDP; along with the West Coast, the city supported

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1. Social Democratic Press 25 Apr 1913, Howard Papers, M.S. 980/74

fully half of the 44 SDP branches that existed in New Zealand.[1a] The advent of the SDP marked the beginning of a new era in the politics of the city. There had been radical political movements before, socialist groups had been active and labour parties had been attempted, but there had been nothing like the SDP.

Working people in Christchurch had been organising politically for at least a generation. Residents of Sydenham had fought their local authority in order to improve their living conditions during the 1860s.[2] The first working man in the New Zealand Parliament came from the city. He was S.P. Andrews, elected while in a 'working man's vocation'[3] but he served only one parliamentary term from 1879 to 1881. The first consolidated burst of political activity from workers came in the late 1880s and early 1890s. In 1887, William Pember Reeves was elected to represent St. Albans, an electorate in the north of the city. This was hardly a distinctly working class area, but Reeves's biographer has nevertheless detected the beginnings of class politics in the campaign of 1887.[4]

By 1890, however, the involvement of the labour movement was quite open. It was the year of the Maritime Strike, the first major Labour-Capital crisis in New Zealand. In the aftermath of the strike, the Christchurch Trades and Labour Council turned decisively to politics. The TLC was active in the formation of a Peoples' Political Association, a prominent member of which was Ebenezer Sandford who had also been a moving spirit in the formation of the TLC itself, and in the Typographical Association, one of the earliest trade unions in the city.[5] Reeves worked closely with this Peoples' Political Association during these campaigns for the general elections of December, 1890. He was again

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1a. Barry Selwyn Gustafson, 'The Advent of the New Zealand Labour Party, 1900-1919'. unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of Auckland, Auckland, p.1

2. Joan Morrison, op.cit., p.28, 108-9

3. J.T. Paul, Humanism in Politics, New Zealand Labour Party, 1946, p.23

4. Keith Sinclair, William Pember Reeves. New Zealand Fabian. Oxford Clarendon Press, 1965. p.73

5. Ibid., p.113-4

elected, indeed the whole city went Liberal, the 'party' to which Reeves belonged. The Trades and Labour Council urged the workers to vote for the Liberals, then the Opposition:

> Wake up, working men, to the patent fact that the so-called Government ... is a great octopus that preys upon the working man. This Conservative pet arranges the taxation ... to suit the capitalist class. [6]

The Liberals won office; Reeves became a high-ranking Cabinet Minister. In 1892, he became New Zealand's first Minister of Labour, the first it was said in the British Empire. He laid down a code of labour legislation in the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act of 1894 that was to have such an abiding influence within the New Zealand labour movement. In some ways, Reeves was too radical for the Liberals. When Richard John Seddon became the Liberal leader in 1893, Reeves gradually became an outsider within his own party. In 1896, he bowed to the inevitable to become Agent General in England.

If Christchurch Labour thus lost Reeves, the city generally remained a Liberal stronghold during the 1890s and the 1900s. In the early days of the Liberal government, a group of men within the parliamentary party percieved themselves as somewhat different. They believed that they had been elected as labour representatives and they referred to themselves as the Labour Party. It was a small group of five men, all from the South Island. Two came from Christchurch - W.W. Tanner, a bootmaker, and Ebenezer Sandford.[7]

The Labour movement was in the meantime becoming progressively disenchanted with its supposed representatives in Parliament, however. In 1898, the Annual Conference of New Zealand Trades and Labour Councils

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6. Keith Sinclair, op.cit., p.121
7. J.T. Paul, op.cit., p.25

had declared in principle for a labour party in Parliament free of the existing political parties. Not until 1904 was there a concrete proposal for such a party at Conference and then the three Christchurch delegates were the sole opponents of the idea. This opposition had more to do with local loyalty than principle; only a few weeks later, the Christchurch delegate most fierce in his opposition was at the forefront of a move to form a Christchurch-based independent labour party.[8]

During the 1900s and the 1910s, there were a number of attempts to form an independent labour party in Christchurch. Several of the city's leading trade unionists contested seats. At the same time, some of the local MPs were amongst the most radical in the country.[9] One of them, Harry Ell, the Liberal Member for Christchurch South until 1919, had helped launch the abortive Christchurch-based labour party of 1904.[10] In 1905 Ell and three other local MPs were behind moves to reform the Liberal government of Richard John Seddon. George Laurenson from Lyttelton, W.H. Tanner from Avon, and Tommy Taylor from Christchurch North, helped form the New Liberal Party, a grouping within Parliament which hoped to put pressure on the government through debating tactics, committees and stone walling to force changes in Cabinet and in party policy. The attempt ended in fiasco; the group became discredited through involvement in unfounded libels on the Premier Seddon who strode rough-shod over them to victory later in 1905.[11] Both Seddon and Taylor remained, however, immensely popular in Christchurch. Taylor lost his seat in 1905, but was re-elected in 1908 and became Mayor of Christchurch

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8. J.T. Paul, op.cit., p.31

9. See R.K. Newman, 'Liberal Policy and the Left Wing, 1908-1911. A study of middle class radicalism in New Zealand.' Unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Auckland, Auckland, 1965. p.63 and passim.

10. J.T. Paul, op.cit., p.31

11. See G.F. Whitcher, "The 'New Liberals' of 1905" H.N. 20 Mar 1970, p.5-8

shortly before his death in 1911.

The commitment to the idea of an independent labour party meanwhile remained strong within the Christchurch labour movement. The moderates' campaign for unity in 1912 climaxed with the formation of the United Labour Party, a single organisation which was to combine both political and industrial activity. The Christchurch TLC became a District Council for the ULP.[12] Most of the political campaigns that had been waged in the city by labour in local politics had been fought and organised by a Labour Representation Committee, which was comprised of representatives of all interested organisations. The TLC continued to work closely with the LRC; there were endless consultations about problems of finance and strategy.[13]

During these pre-war years, there were a number of other groups active in the city which saw themselves as leftwing, but had few links with the industrial labour movement. Some were merely small study groups, set up on an ad hoc basis to discuss political ideas and writings.[14] Others were larger and more formally organised. One of the earliest, and most successful, was the Socialist Church, established by Harry Atkinson in 1896. Atkinson had a long history of involvement with the Labour movement. In 1890 he helped form an engineers union in Wellington but then left for Britain where he became involved in the formation of Labour Churches and the Independent Labour Party. He returned to New Zealand, inspired to carry on the work and set about forming his own church in Christchurch. The Socialist Church met weekly, although services were unlike those of the established churches. About the only

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12. TLC Minutes, 16 Jan 1913

13. Ibid., 27 Mar 1913, 24 Apr 1913; TLC Executive Minutes 24 Apr 1913, 11 Sept 1913

14. Eg. the study group to which Elizabeth Hendersen, later Elizabeth McCombs, belonged. See Isabel Langford, 'Elizabeth Reid McCombs. First Woman Member of the New Zealand Parliament'. Unpublished M.A. thesis, Victoria University College, Wellington, 1945, p.16

distinctly 'religious' activity being the singing of hymns. Members were more interested in the discussion of the possibilities and problems of socialism for political parties and the advancement of society.[15] Harry Atkinson also campaigned during the 1890s and early 1900s in the Square, the heart of the city of Christchurch and then the meeting place for all kinds of groups competing for public attention - a local equivalent of Hyde Park. Among those who listened to Atkinson, and were won over by his argument, was John McCullough.[16] McCullough was then an employee at the Addington Railway Workshops, but by the outbreak of war in 1914 he was a workers' representative on the Arbitration Court. From the time he first heard Atkinson speak, McCullough remained committed to independent labour politics. He became an organiser for the ULP, joined later the SDP and the Labour Party. He stood as a Labour candidate during the interwar years and when Labour finally came to power, John McCullough was rewarded for his services to the party and was made a Member of the Legislative Council, the upper house of the New Zealand Parliament. McCullough's whole family was involved in labour politics. His brother James was one of the first labour City Councillors in Christchurch, remaining on the Council throughout the war.[17]

However, in spite of the support of such stalwarts, the Socialist Church declined after the turn of the century. Harry Atkinson then turned to the formation of another organisation, the Fabian Society, which continued in existance until after the first World War. The Fabian Society affiliated to the SDP in 1913 and John McCullough attended at least one Annual Conferance as a Fabian delegate.[18] The chief propogandist of the Society, however, was Eveline Cunnington. She wrote prolifically,

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15. See H.O, Roth, 'The Labour Churches and New Zealand'. IRSH IV (3) 1959, p.361-6. Especially p.361-4.
16. Ibid., p.366
17. S 24 Apr 1915, p.12, c.2
18. Diary Vol V, 10 Jul 1915, 18 Jul 1915. J.A. McCullough Papers

pamphlets and letters, speeches, and articles for the Maoriland Worker, New Zealand's labour newspaper.

Eveline Cunnington was associated with another Christchurch socialist group, the Church Socialist League, led by clergymen from the Anglican Church. The League was formed in 1913, partly in response to pressure from the Fabian Society. Eveline Cunnington had always been anxious that the clergy especially those of her own Anglican denomination should avow their sympathy for socialism. 'I do wish some of our clergy would come forward as declared socialists' she wrote. 'Our Fabian Society is going to send some of the clergy a circular letter asking for their opinions on Socialism and stating that many of the clergy at home are declared Christian Socialists.'[19]

These groups - the Fabians and the Church Socialists - may have seen themselves as left wing or as radicals, but they were not of the working class, although contact with both trade unions and working class people were at times close. Nevertheless, membership of such groups tended to be middle class. Harry Atkinson was the nephew of a former conservative Premier of New Zealand.[20] Eveline Cunnington had been born into a wealthy and titled English family;[21] during the war she lived in Merivale and the family also owned a holiday residence at Sumner. Most members of the Fabian Society were affluent; businessmen, professionals and self-employed were a solid core. Others were highly educated.[22] The Anglican Church in Christchurch was the denomination of the upper class with few contacts in the working class areas.[23]

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19. Eveline Willett Cunnington, The Lectures and Letters of Eveline Willett Cunnington. Edited by her Children, Christchurch, Lyttelton Times Co. 1918. p.122

20. Valerie Smith, 'Gospel of Hope' unpublished Research Essay, Massey University, 1976. p.37

21. See Noel A. Parsloe, Eveline Willett Cunnington and the Origins of the Canterbury WEA. National Council of Adult Education, Wellington, 1971, for details of Cunnington's life.

22. See Chapter VI, p.

23. See Chapter I, p.

However, there was active in Christchurch one specifically working class political group of the left, although still organised independently of the industrial labour movement. This was the Socialist Party. In 1901 a New Zealand Socialist Party had been formed but the first attempt to foster a local branch came to nothing. The TLC had sponsored a public meeting, 'the Council desires to impress ... the absolute need of forming a political party that shall be of sufficient strength ... based on right and justice, to combat the commercialism of the age....'[24] Radicals of all kinds flocked along to the meeting and socialists were swamped by single-taxers and prohibitionists.[25]

Nevertheless, there was a Socialist Party branch in 1914, also known to contemporaries as the Revolutionary Socialist League. Its leaders were two working men, Ted Howard and Fred Cooke. Howard was an English man, born in Bristol, who became a seaman in his youth, He roved the world, coming to New Zealand first in 1887. He met and married a Christchurch women and they settled for a time in South Australia. In accordance with the dying wish of his wife Howard returned to Christchurch in 1900 in order to raise their family. By 1914, Howard was fifty-two;[26] he intended to grow old in his adopted city, of which he had become both fond and proud. In 1913 Howard had become the secretary of the General Labourers' Union, a post he retained until the end of the war and after 1917 he was also secretary of the Christchurch TLC.[27] Fred Cooke was a tailor and like Howard, a hard working union organiser. He was President of his own union, the Tailoresses and Pressers for most of the 1914-18 war period.[28]

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24. T.L.C. Circular letter, December 1901, J.A. McCullough Papers
25. H.O. Roth 'The New Zealand Socialist Party' P.S. 9 [1] Mar 1957. p.53
26. MW 24 Dec 1919, p.5,c.6
27. T.L.C. Annual Report, 1917-20
28. eg. Tailoresses and Pressers' Union, Executive Minutes 4 Sep 1916 and Minutes 16 Aug 1917.

Both men had been active in the Christchurch TLC during the 1900s, Cooke was the treasurer in 1907[29] and Howard president in 1909.[30] But in the years immediately before the outbreak of war, they had turned their backs on the Council and for a time the Socialist Party was the sole focus of their commitment. The party remained a very small one, however. Just a few families kept it going, providing a core of industry and finance.[31] During the 1914-18 war, the character of the Socialist Party changed, since after the Socialists affiliated with the SDP in 1913, there was no room for campaigning as a rival political party. They gradually became absorbed. In 1918 the Socialists moved their office[32] into the Trades Hall and their energies were turned towards the training of the young, rather than the winning over of the adult voter. The Socialist Sunday School was formed, led by G.H.J. Chapple, a former Unitarian Minister from Timaru who spent some time in the United States[33] before settling in Christchurch. Chapple took a great interest in children. He was himself a family man, with twelve children of his own. In close co-operation with Ted Howard in particular, who was widely known for his love of children,[34] Chappel organised and officiated at the services of the Socialist sunday school. As at conventional sunday schools, children were given religious training. Each class opened with a recitation by the pupils: We desire to be just and loving to all men and women; to work together as brothers and sisters; to be kind to every living creature; and to help to form a new society with Justice as its foundation and Love as its law .[35]

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29. T.L.C. Annual Report 1907
00. Ibid., 1909
31. See Socialist Party Records 1909, for a list of how few contributors gave their time and energy to keep the party operating.
32. MW 11 Sep 1918, p.6, c.6
33. Ibid., 30 Aug 1916, p.3, c.4-5
34. He wrote as 'Uncle Ted' in the Maoriland Workers' children's columns.
35. Ann Saunders "He's for the morning"; Alfred William Page: His Journal, also some recollections of his life by Ellen & Ann Saunders, Christchurch, A. Wildey, 1939, p.26

The Socialist Sunday school had its own set of hymns, ' ... We sang ... about peace and justice, and about the Golden Age; we recited sayings out of our books' remembered one pupil:

> "While there is a lower class, I am in it,
> While there is a soul in prison, I am not free ..."
> We were taught about the evils of the Capitalist System, about the causes of war, about the injustices that resulted from man's greed, about those who suffered for righteousness sake .... [37]

There was a unique set of ceremonies also, to mark the progress of the children towards the attainment of a socialist life. In August 1917, the Socialist Sunday school held its first dedication ceremony. Chapple opened by leading the congregation in the singing of the Red Flag, then delivered an address to the attending parents. Children were finally lined up along the front of the stage, and the banner of the Socialist Party of New Zealand waved over them, 'while the Rev. Chapple dedicated them to the Socialist movement.'[38] At times during the First World War, over 120[39] children attended the Sunday school. As well, the Socialist Party held picnics regularly, for entire families;[40] it did carry on the with some work of political propoganda,[41] but the fire of the pre-war era was extinguished.

The Social Democratic Party of 1913 was therefore quite unique in Christchurch. It differed from all the earlier labour and socialist parties in that it was based firmly on a foundation of working class support. Unlike the NZSP it was to develop a mass following. This was

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37. Muriel Morrison, WEA Scrapbook
38. MW 8 Aug 1917, p.3, c.4
39. Ibid., 11 Sept 1918, p.6, c.6
40. Ibid., 9 Jan 1918, p.4, c.8
41. Ibid., 8 May 1918, p.5, c.4.

in marked contrast also to the ULP, which had remained tied closely to the trade unions. There had been ULP branches in at least the Christchurch North and Christchurch South electorates,[42] but their activity was rudimentary. They did not even manage to consistently send delegates to the meetings of the District Council.[43] John McCullough worked hard for the ULP as the party's local organiser, but most of his time and energy was expended on the unions. He was jubilant in 1912 when he began to get some kind of response. The cycle workers had agreed to affiliate, a breakthrough after the discovery of 'vicious' opposition within the engineers' union. He wrote to a friend about his plan of attack, co-operating with J.T. Paul, a leading figure in Dunedin labour circles:

> That is good! But this is better! They have also decided to have a Social evening in the first week in July ... & invite all the Presidents & sectys [sic] of all those unions ... & when they get them there to turn Tom Paul & I loose onto them and teach them their duty towards the ULP .... the Social may give us the chance ....[44]

In marked contrast to this dependence upon the unions, the energy of the Social Democratic Party in Christchurch grew out of its involvement with the wider community. In a very short time, the SDP gained a strong hold within the working class areas of the city. There were at least six SDP branches active by the first year of war.[45] One ULP branch, Christchurch North, simply switched allegiance in 1913,[46] and affiliated with the SDP, but matters were not always managed so amicably. The

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42. Diary Vol IV 28 Sept 1914, J.A. McCullough Papers; MW 30 Oct 1913, p.5, c.4
43. T.L.C. Minutes, 16 Jan 1913
44. John McCullough to Robertson, 31 May 1912, J.A. McCullough Papers
45. Christchurch North MW 3 Oct 1913, p.5, c.4; Avon, Ibid., 2 Sept 1914, p.4, c.3; Central, Ibid., 10 Feb 1915, p.8, c.6; Riccarton, Christchurch East and Woolston, see below
46. Ibid., 3 Oct 1913, p.5, c.4

Christchurch South ULP had embittered relations with the SDP for some time. Ultimately, John McCullough managed to smooth matters over.[47]

The power-house of SDP activity in Christchurch was the Woolston branch of the party. It was founded during the 1913 waterfront dispute by James McCombs[48] the man the party chose to contest the Lyttelton by-election. Centred in the oldest of the industrial suburbs of Christchurch, and close to the thriving working class areas of Sydenham and Linwood, progress in Woolston was spectacular. It drew upon the traditions of a core of British immigrants who had been active within the Independent Labour Party.[49] Many of the customs and institutions of the British labour movement were emulated by the branch of the SDP in Woolston. There were Christmas camps for the families and friends of supporters.[50] A dramatic society[51] and a choir modelled on the Clarion Choir of Britain[52] both flourished. The Woolston Branch became the heart and soul of SDP social activity in the city; no function was complete without its quota of Woolston party members to swell the numbers and start the music and dancing. Victories were celebrated and defeats forgotten in the conviviality of the socials.[53] The concerts of the Woolston choir were the admiration and envy of labour throughout New Zealand - 'more wonderful than all ... a choir and a successful choir too' declared Peter Fraser, National Organising Secretary of the SDP in 1915.[54]

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47. Diary Vol IV 28 Sept 1914. J.A. McCullough Papers. He brought John Rigg to Christchurch as mediator.
48. Interview with Sir Terence McCombs, 12 Dec 1978
49. MW 22 Dec 1915, p.4, c.5
50. Ibid.
51. Ibid.
52. Ibid.
53. Eg. Ibid., 2 Jun 1915, p.5, c.3; Ibid., 16 Jun 1915, p.8, c.3
54. Ibid., 22 Dec 1915, p.4, c.5

But other branches were also active and vigorous. In Christchurch East, a predominantly working class area, there was also a branch. Once business had been attended to at meetings, members turned to euchre; they played for prizes donated by local firms - a silver-mounted umbrella, handkerchiefs, an 'outfit'.[55] The Riccarton Branch was also strong. Riccarton was not a working class area, but it did contain a working class enclave. A number of the men who worked at the Addington Railway Workshops lived in that suburb and it was from them and their families that the branch drew its strength. John McCullough, who lived in Riccarton, was a prominent member. The branch members met regularly in the Supper Room of the Town Hall, and after business frequently staged debates - 'Will the war assist or retard Social Democracy?'[56] they wondered, little more than a year after it had begun.

The outbreak of hostilities in August 1914 was something of a blow to the Christchurch SDP. Propoganda work came to a halt for a time since 'the public are hardly in the frame of mind for that kind of thing.'[57] But generally morale remained high. In the months immediately before the outbreak of the war the Woolston Branch had been marching from strength to strength; 50 new members joined within the space of just a few weeks, the Mayor of the Borough, J.J. Graham, became a convert to the party, and there was a healthy bank balance.[58] In the local elections of 1915, the SDP consolidated its hold in the area. Graham was re-elected and the six SDP candidates came top of the poll. In Christchurch City, the party's representation went up to five. Two men were re-elected from the Sydenham Ward - but the real advance for the party came in Linwood - where all three SDP candidates were elected.[59]

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55. MW 12 Aug 1914, p.2, c.4
56. Ibid., 17 Nov 1915, p.4, c.5
57. Ibid., 13 Oct 1915, p.7, c.6
58. Ibid., 19 Aug 1914, p.6, c.2
59. Ibid., 4 May 1915, p.3, c.3-4

By this time, Christchurch was in the forefront of the New Zealand political labour movement. It was the only city where the SDP had achieved substantial successes; the Maoriland Worker sadly compared the situation with that of Wellington and Dunedin, where 'much educational and organising propoganda'[60] was required. Christchurch was proud of its achievement and wanted its recognition; in 1915, the locals made an unsuccessful bid for the SDP headquarters to be shifted to the city, when the Woolston branch put forward a remit to the Annual Conference.[61]

SDP branches elicted a different, much more rounded loyalty from their supporters than did the older institutions of the labour movement, the trade unions. As was almost impossible in the male-dominated world of industrial labour, women could play an important role in party branch activity. A number of women were on the executives of the local branches, although men retained the highest posts. Women were more than necessary for the dancing, music and singing that were part of the life and vigour of the SDP.[62] In the social activities of the unions, however, their function was strictly limited. They became involved only when the union secretary wrote 'to a number of ladies asking them to assist us in cutting sandwiches'.[63]

The SDP answered a need for the working class community of Christchurch. It provided a meaning and a venue for social activity that was unaligned to Churches, traditional radical causes like prohibition, or the sectarianism of the Orange lodges. Moreover, the lodges did not, like the SDP include both men and women. There was a gaiety and conviviality at SDP functions which approached that of the public house, but without any of the attendant social stigma. Respectable women seldom went into public bars,

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60. MW 4 May 1915, p.3, c.3
61. Ibid., 28 Jun 1915, p.5, c.2
62. Eg. MW 23 Jan 1918, p.5, c.2 for a good description of 'The Woolston Party'.
63. General Labourers Union, Minutes, 25 Sep 1917

but an SDP social was quite another matter. But the party was more than a social outlet; through the SDP branches, the Christchurch workers developed a network of institutions and traditions that provided them with a sense of achievement. The choir, camps, dramatic society, debating and sports teams[64] all bred a sense of community, self-awareness and self-worth.

The growth of the party, directly in the community was a sign that the SDP was coming of age. It was a more mature political party than those which had come before. As a party seeking parliamentary power it had to win mass support; it had to establish a power base directly in the community. In a city like Christchurch, with a considerable mix of occupations, even a labour party had to move out beyond reliance upon committed unionists.

Unionism by no means had a monopoly upon the loyalties of working people during this era. Trade union membership was voluntary until the 1930s and workers in different trades varied in their union commitment. In Christchurch by 1914, between half and two-thirds of the men in skilled trades like carpentry and bootmaking belonged to a union.[65] In other all-male trades like engineering and meat-working, the percentage was similar. In clothing manufacture, food production and processing, the proportion was lower. These were the trades which employed large numbers of women and unionism penetrated only slowly. Over 1,500 women were working in the clothing trades by the First World War; over 1,000 of them in dressmaking and millinery. But the Tailoresses' Union had only 328 members. The fact that women did not expect to work in paid employment for most of their lives meant that they were less likely to develop an interest in unionism. For many, work was only a temporary

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64. Eg. Cricket teams MW 12 Apr 1916, p.6, c.7

65. This picture drawn from data, AJHR, 1915, H-11, Labour Report, p.28-9

expedient, a fill-in before the real business of life, marriage, began. It mattered less that working conditions were poor, when one intended to endure them for only a few years. Unionism also imposed a greater financial burden upon women than upon men. On about half the wage of the average working man, union rates were twice the problem for working women. The TLC recognised this and in 1917 it halved affiliation fees for the all-female Tailoresses Union.[66]

There was no pattern of consistent growth in Christchurch trade unions during the war. The General Labourers' Union was one of the largest in the city in 1914, but its numbers declined rapidly as many unskilled men volunteered for the front immediately war was declared.[67] Employment prospects were at the time rather grim; contractors cut back on planned work when war broke out and unskilled men, particularly builders' labourers were especially hard-hit.[68] Within days, there were over 100 out of work.

Even the big trade unions in Christchurch, like that of the general labourers, were almost continually in debt throughout the war.[69] Once the Armistice was signed union membership began to rise, swelled by returning servicemen.[70] At the same time however, unemployment also rose. Moreover many employers felt honour-bound to employ returned soldiers in preference to unionists.

Lyttelton was unlike the rest of Christchurch in the hold that the waterfront union gained over the men. Almost invariably several hundred men attended union meetings.[71] The union had its own club rooms, complete

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66. T.L.C., Executive Minutes 8 Mar 1917
67. General Labourers' Union, Minutes 20 Jun 1916. 120 members had then enlisted.
68. LT 13 Aug 1914, p.9, c.6; Ibid., 27 Aug 1914, p.5, c.5
69. General Labourers' Union, Minutes 19 Jun 1918
70. Ibid., 17 Jun 1919
71. See Lyttelton Waterside Workers' Union, Minutes 1914-19

with library, billiard and snooker tables and tea-making facilities.[72] The union became a focal point for the social lives of many of the men; it even acted as a disciplinary body. Men were commonly admonished and fined by the union executive for drunkenness, fighting or generally behaving 'in a manner that would bring discredit on the union ...'[73] However, the union meetings themselves were often disturbed by such exuberance and it was finally resolved by the members that anyone 'disturbing the meeting while being under the influence of liquor be debarred the use of the hall for one month.'[74] Small wonder the union had such problems; at least one meeting broke up after the members overwhelmingly called for 'the cask of beer in the Railway Good Shed [sic] to be proc ured and served out to members forthwith.'[75]

Outside Lyttelton, however, it would have been impossible for a political party in Christchurch to thrive by working solely through trade unions. The growth of party branches was a wholly necessary development. The rise of James McCombs was symptomatic of this new phase of labour politics.

McCombs had not been closely associated with any of the earlier independent labour parties that had been sponsored by the TLC and the unions in the city. Indeed, his contact with the union world was limited. He had been a draper's assistant in a city store, risen to be buyer and then gone into his own importing business with a partner. During the war, while McCombs was pre-occupied with his duties as an MP, this business went bankrupt when the partner absconded with the money.[76] In spite of the fact that he was a self-employed businessman, McCombs became involved

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72. Eg. Ibid., Committee Minutes 24 May 1914; Ibid., 4 Nov 1915
73. Ibid., 23 Nov 1916
74. Ibid., Minutes 2 May 1916
75. Ibid., 19 Feb 1918
76. Interview, Sir Terence McCombs, 12 Dec 1978

in the Drapers' Assistants Union and for some time during the war, he was its president.[77] However, this was a small city union and not affiliated to the TLC.

The Lyttelton by-election of 1913 was not James McCombs' first expedition into politics. He had been active in the Progressive Liberal Association around the turn of the century. It was in this organisation that he first met the woman he later married, Elizabeth Hendersen[78] whose sister Christina was for a number of years the secretary of the Association.[79] In 1908 and again in 1911 election campaigns McCombs claimed to be an 'out-and-out Radical', an independent who would 'vote right' and 'agitate to create new opportunities of voting right.'[80] In 1908, he opposed Fred Cooke, who stood as the Socialist Party candidate. McCombs' platform on both ocassions put heavy emphasis on land and electoral reform but also included a number of labour planks - a minimum wage and a 44-hour week, compulsory preference to unionists and compensation for injury.[81]

The selection by the Social Democratic Party of such a man without a power base in the unions for the by-election of 1913 indicated the way labour politics in the city were changing. All party members in the electorate were eligible to vote in the selection of a party candidate; this favoured the man well known in the larger community and McCombs won out over two trade union organisers, one a watersider from Lyttelton and the other Dan Sullivan, secretary of the Furniture Workers.[82]

Sullivan had also stood for Parliament in 1908 and 1911. A

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77. MW 19 May 1915, p.4, c.2
78. Interview Sir Terence McCombs, 12 Dec 1978
79. C.F. Billcliff 'The Life of Thomas Edward Taylor, M.P. 1863-1911' unpublished M.A. Thesis, Canterbury University College, 1948, p.iii
80. Election pamphlets
81. Ibid.
82. LT 26 Nov 1913, p.11, c.6. Ibid., 29 Nov 1913, p.13, c.5

younger man than James McCombs, Sullivan was beginning to accumulate considerable experience in politics. He had been a leading figure not only in his own union, but also in the TLC, where he had been on the executive for a number of years and served at least one term as president.[83] He was also becoming adept in the arts of propoganda, writing for the Lyttelton Times until November 1913[84] and then during the war, writing a twice weekly labour column in the Sun. The men of Sullivan's union were evidently very proud of their young executive officer. They supported his campaigns for Parliament and in 1914 gave £14 to swell his funds, 'several members expressing the opinion that the election of the Secretary to a seat in Parliament would be of the utmost value to workers throughout New Zealand.'[85]

Sullivan was a careful and assiduous organiser. His record in 1908, 1911 and 1914 general elections showed each time a steady increase in the number of votes he received and at least part of the reason for his success lay in the attention he gave to organisation. He urged, regularly and earnestly, that the whole of the Christchurch labour movement should give its first attention to organisation. It should develop some form of secretariat, an organisation that had a permanent existence. Between elections, he declared, the SDP was more of a sentiment than a structure, although it might leap into activity 'for five minutes'[86] in order to afford an impressive welcome to national figures. In Linwood and Avon where he consolidated a personal power-base, Sullivan took pains to remain in touch with grass-roots activity and the day-to-day organisation, which devolved upon a 'few devoted supporters, chiefly women.'[87] This kind of

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83. Vice president 1907, 1909, President 1911. T.L.C. Annual Report, 1907-11
84. LT 29 Nov 1913, p.16, c.1. Farewell column.
85. Christchurch Furniture Workers' Union, Minutes, 14 Oct 1914
86. S 27 Nov 1915, p.12, c.1
87. Ibid., 1 May 1915, p.12, c.1

attention produced results. In 1919 Sullivan was to take Avon for Labour with the biggest single vote of any candidate put up by the party in the country. His only close rival was Ted Howard.

Howard had generally held aloof from specifically 'labour' politics in the years immediately before the war. In 1911 he stood as a Socialist Party candidate[88] in Christchurch South, but he did not contest the 1914 election. It was not until 1917 that he reappeared on the hustings for a political party. In that year he became a leader in Labour's campaign against conscription. By the end of the war, however, Howard's popularity was immense. His concern with purely local issues like town planning,[89] the drift of population and prosperity to the North Island[90] and his work for returned servicemen[91] all enhanced his personal appeal.

Sullivan and Howard were both members of an occupation only then coming into existence in Christchurch - the professional union bureaucrat. Both men were fortunate in that they were involved with a group of workers sufficiently large and well-organised to support their own full-time union organiser. Hiram Hunter was not so lucky.

Hunter was the other leading figure in the local SDP with a strong base in the unions. During the war he was secretary of three city unions: the Timberyard Workers, the Tramwaymen and the Drivers - two important groups of transport workers. In 1919 the drivers appointed their first full time secretary and Hunter was their choice.[92] At the beginning of the war, Hunter's political future looked bright. He had stood for

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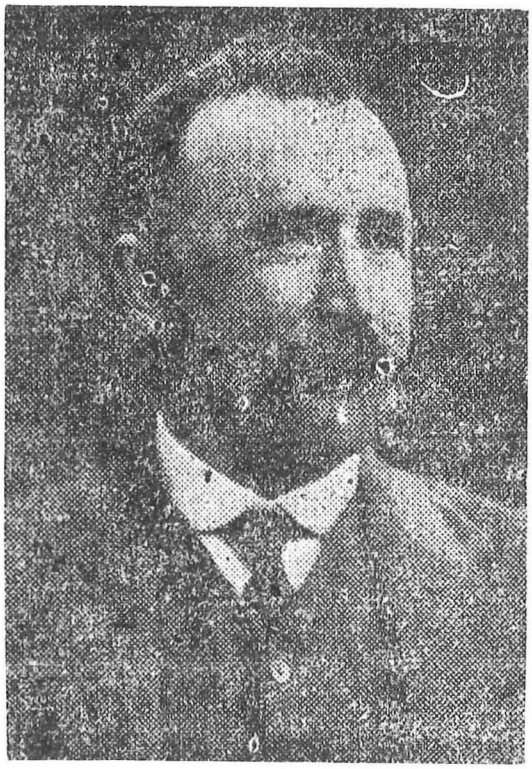
88. J.T. Paul, op.cit., Appendix E, p.177

89. LT 21 Jun 1919, p.1, c.6

90. Ibid., 4 Dec 1919, p.3, c.5

91. T.L.C. Minutes 1 Feb 1919, nominated for Repatriation Board. LT 17 Aug 1919, p.7, c.4; Ibid., 16 Oct 1919, p.6, c.7, active on Board.

92. Christchurch Tramway Workers' Union, Minutes 17 Apr 1919



Christchurch East in 1911 and missed election by only three votes. In 1914, the SDP 'regarded as certain'[93] his return to Parliament but in fact he was easily beaten by Dr. Henry Thacker, a Liberal. In 1913, Hunter had been one of the first men elected to the City Council on an SDP ticket. In 1915 he missed re-election[94] and although he did get back on to the Council during the war, his political fortunes did not fulfil their pre-war promise. In the 1919 general election he again missed out in Christchurch East and in 1922 when the seat did fall to Labour, Hunter was not the party's candidate.

Hunter, Sullivan and Howard all had deep roots in the local industrial labour movement. James McCombs lacked this, but nevertheless had a long history of involvement in local movements of agitation and reform. As a group, the leaders of the Christchurch SDP were well assimilated into the political and community life of their city. They were characteristic of the population of Christchurch in other ways. They were all New Zealand born. Sullivan and Hunter had been born and raised in the city,[95] although Dan Sullivan had travelled. McCombs had been born in Ireland but had come to New Zealand and settled in Kaiapoi with his parents when he was only three.[96] Howard had been the last to arrive, although he had been in the city a decade and a half by the outbreak of war. His attachment to the city was strengthened by the memory of his dead wife, whose love of Christchurch had been strong. Furthermore, like the city's population as a whole, the leaders of the SDP in Christchurch were in 1914 an older group; Sullivan was the youngest at 32 years.[97]

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93. MW 4 Nov 1914, p.8, c.4
94. Ibid., 4 May 1915, p.3, c.4
95. Ibid., 2 Dec 1914, p.2, c.2
96. Interview Sir Terence McCombs, 12 Dec 1978
97. MW 24 Dec 1919, p.5, c.6

In background and achievement also, the leaders of the local political labour movement reflected the character of the Christchurch working class. McCombs was a shop assistant who made it to the ranks of the self-employed. He accumulated sufficient wealth to ensure comfort, if not affluence. He bought his wife a house in Fendalton, and gave her a rare Russian wolf-hound to act as guard dog during his long absences.[98] Both McCombs and McCullough owned property in Sumner,[99] and McCullough was often appealled to by the impecunious within the labour movement, for funds to help them out of difficulties. He frequently gave to both the private and party ventures of labour men.[100] Similarly Sullivan was intent upon self-improvement. Initially a skilled tradesman, his abilities in journalism took him further from the world of the manual workers.[101]

Such labour leaders set the tone. If Howard remained proudly a member of the unskilled, other minor, but none the less influential members of the SDP belonged to the managerial sector, or were self-employed.[102] Such leadership was not likely to tramp the path of revolution. Nevertheless, they were innovators in politics. The Christchurch SDP saw itself and was seen by the labour movement throughout New Zealand as a pace-setter.

It was a different story within the industrial wing of the local labour movement. There tradition reigned. The Trades and Labour Council had a proud history in Christchurch and during the 1900s, it had been the pride of labour in the city. Scores of trade unions had been affiliated,

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98. Interview, Stella Joyce, 29 November 1978

99. Gordon Ogilvie, op.cit., p.46-8

100. Eg. Diary Vol. IV, 28 Sept 1914, and miscellaneous letters, J.A. McCullough Papers

101. Eg. Withdrew from T.L.C. T.L.C. Minutes 29 Apr 1916

102. Eg. Harry Herbert, manager of shoe store, James McCullough owned a paint firm, S 24 Apr 1915, p.12, c.2

and more than 100 delegates regularly attended meetings of the TLC.[103] Morale had been high, and the unions had embarked upon an ambitious building programme erecting a fine Trades Hall, with rooms for both social functions and the offices of some city unions. All this had suddenly collapsed. Part of the reason lay in local bickerings over finance,[104] but more important was the involvement of unionists from outside the city. New ideas were at the time abroad within the industrial labour movement in New Zealand, and on the West Coast in particular, syndicalist ideas took root. Leaders like the Australians Paddy Webb and Bob Semple, along with the New Zealander Pat Hickey who had spent some time in the United States working among men influenced by syndicalism, spread the new doctrine in the mining towns of the 'Coast' and elsewhere. They advocated direct action, rather than arbitration and used local grievances and disputes to prove their point. Their success was such that in 1908 the 'Red' Federation of Labour was formed, with solid support from the mining towns.

These West Coast militants had contacts with the Christchurch labour movement. One member of the Socialist Party branch in Christchurch went to work with Hickey and Semple,[105] and these FOL leaders frequently came to Christchurch. They began to win powerful adherents from within the TLC; Howard and Cooke were two prominent leaders who switched allegiance. It was a death-blow to the Trades and Labour Council, which was left reduced and demoralised with no more than about a dozen affiliates.[106] The collapse of the TLC had a two-fold effect upon local union leaders. Dissension, as a result of 'keen feeling on party politics and ... new ideas regarding forms of industrial organisation'[107] gave

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103. S 9 Jan 1915, p.12, c.2-3. Ibid., 1 Apr 1916, p.12, c.1-3
104. Ibid.
105. Valerie Smith, op.cit., p.65
106. S 9 Jan 1915, p.12, c.2
107. Ibid., C.3

had been most enthusiastic about the new organisation in July 1913, but by November when the industrial trouble erupted, no local union had affiliated. Since progress was even slower elsewhere in the country, the UFL was largely a paper organisation during 1913; it had no real strength for an industrial battle.

Early in 1914, in the wake of the strike, the UFL was re-organised at another national conference by a labour movement angry in the belief that it had been dragged into industrial action by an excessively militant leadership and constitution. The socialist objective was dropped, the strike clause modified and the Industrial Departments were replaced by autonomous District Councils constituted on a geographical basis. Canterbury became the first headquarters, and Sullivan the President.[112]

Now heading the national movement, Christchurch union leaders turned decisively to pull their own people into line. The canvassing of the unions began and two days before the outbreak of war in August 1914, the TLC voted to resolve itself into a District Council of the UFL.[113] Some unions were willing to join immediately but others refused. Small city unions found the increase in fees too steep,[114] but others still feared that the UFL was excessively militant. The Typographical Association, one of the oldest unions in the city, regarded by local unionists as the father of the TLC, declined to join the new organisation. The Association was also one of the most conservative unions in the city. It had become solicitous about its status and interests as an organisation of highly skilled craftsmen. Nevertheless, its leaders regretted leaving the TLC, which their predecessors had helped to establish.

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112. See H.O. Roth, Trade Unions in New Zealand. Past and Present A.H. & A.W. Reed, Wellington, 1973. p.36-42

113. T.L.C. Executive Minutes 23 Jul 1914; T.L.C. Minutes 6 Aug 1914

114. Eg. Jewellers' Union, T.L.C. Minutes 21 Jan 1915

John Barr, the delegate to the TLC, himself the Mayor of Sumner and a Member of the Legislative Council, expressed 'his pleasure with the association with the Council in the past and his regrets in having to sever his connection therewith ...! Sullivan proposed the eulogistic vote of thanks to 'the Hon. John'.[115]

By March 1915, when the TLC finally became formally a District Council of the UFL, union organisation in the city was at a low ebb. As part of the UFL, the TLC had even fewer affiliates than previously.[116] As a national organisation also, the UFL was weak. Most of the important West Coast unions were at the time affiliated; at least 13 Otago unions formally joined and about 10 in Auckland.[117] Elsewhere there was nothing. Even amongst those who had worked hard for the federation, there was a feeling that it was in fact a rather lack-lustre organisation. Sullivan declared that it did not have the 'spirit and enthusiasm' of its predecessor, but he looked forward to a 'common-sense future'.[118]

The Christchurch TLC was the backbone of the UFL throughout the war. During 1915, some of the largest city unions joined - the Bootmakers, the clothing workers and the tramway men. In the following year, five more unions affiliated and only one left; attendence improved and no meeting had to be abandoned for lack of a quorum. Christchurch again acted as the national executive in 1918, and five more unions came in.[119] However, this picture of consolidation was due to the influence of traditional local loyalties and did not represent the growth of commitment to a new national structure. The Canterbury District Council of the UFL was in fact reasserting itself as the Christchurch TLC; it became pre-eminent within the UFL only because other more potentially powerful

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115. T.L.C. Minutes, 4 Mar 1915
116. Ibid., 18 Mar 1915
117. S 6 Mar 1915, p.3, c.2
118. Ibid., 15 May 1915, p.12, c.1
119. T.L.C. Annual Report 1915 - 8

unions turned away from the Federation towards a new, more militant and innovative union organisation.

Christchurch was never at the centre of these new developments. They arose in Wellington, out of the organisation of the waterfront workers and culminated in 1919 in the formation of the Alliance of Labour, which out-witted and outmanoeuvred the UFL. The Alliance was the brain child of Jim Roberts, a burly Irishman who rose to prominence on the Wellington waterfront in the wake of the 1913 strike. He had plans for the combination of all workers along industrial lines into a militant structure. This was a bold idea; some sectors of the transport industry had traditionally been very conservative, and exclusive. This was particularly true of the railwaymen. Even in Christchurch they were looked upon as 'the most conservative in the country, ... there is much justification for the feeling'.[120] But 'Big' Jim was not daunted.

He began by re-organising his own industry on the waterfront and establishing a national federation of watersiders. The Lyttelton watersiders were enthusiastic. The 1913 strike had not been as devasting in its effects on union organisation in Lyttelton as in some centres.[121] There had been little attempt to smash the existing union or to ensure the continuance of blackleg labour. Indeed, some strikebreakers publicly complained that the promises of employment that had been given by employers were not being kept. Unionists, they claimed, were reasserting control. The position 'has been changed and has been creeping on by degrees',[122] complained one. The shipping companies were philosophical and indifferent - if the work required experience, they would hire only

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120. S 18 Jan 1916, p.12, c.2
121. See H.O. Roth, Trade Unions in New Zealand, p.43
122. LT 7 Oct 1914, p.5, c.5

experienced men.[123] By the end of 1914, the passions engendered by the strike in Lyttelton had 'faded out to a dull ember.'[124]

However those who had actually led the local waterfront unions during the strike had indeed been driven out and persecuted. Frank Lurch, who was then the president had been unable to find work even by the time that war broke out. Lurch was a German, which compounded his problems in the jingoistic atmosphere of the early days of war. When he did manage to gain employment in 1915, Lurch was promptly dismissed on account of his birth, in spite of the fact that he had been settled in the country for 45 years, been naturalised in 1887 and had raised 16 children in New Zealand. The General Labourers' union took up his case and secured his reinstatement.[125] Lurch remained active in that union for a time, always keen on expounding his One Big Union ideas.[126] The watersiders remembered him with affection; when an accident necessitated the amputation of a leg, the men at Lyttelton took up a collection.[127]

After the 1913 strike, the water front union at the port was under the leadership of John Flood and Ernest Langley. Flood had been President of the General Labourers',[128] but transferred in 1913 to the wharves.[129] He first became president of the Lyttelton watersiders,[130] then secretary of the union, a post he held for many years. Langley became president immediately after Flood, but resigned in 1919.[131] Langley

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123. LT 7 Oct 1914, p.5, c.5

124. S 23 Jan 1915, p.12, c.2

125. MW 9 Sep 1914, p.7,c.5; LT 2 Sep 1914, p.10,c.2; Ibid., 12 May 1915 p.9,c.5

126. Eg. General Labourers' Union Minutes, 5 Jan 1915, 19 Jul 1915, and Executive Minutes 15 Oct 1915

127. Lyttelton Waterside Workers' Union, Minutes 1 Apr 1919

128 General Labourers' Union Executive Minutes 17 Jan 1913

129 General Labourers' Union Minutes 24 Jun 1913

130 Lyttelton Waterside Workers' Union Minutes 27 May 1915

131 Ibid., 11 Oct 1919

had reservations about the national organisation established by Roberts and behind the scenes he pressed for local awards and agreements,[132] but was over-ruled by the rank-and-file on each occasion. The temper of the men was in favour of national co-ordination.

In 1916, Roberts made a further move towards the co-ordination of all transport workers throughout the country. At a national conference, watersiders, railwaymen and tramwaymen agreed to the formation of a Transport Workers Advisory Board. Christchurch tramwaymen were at first not interested. They had joined the UFL in 1915 only after long and bitter infighting.[133] Although they sent a delegate to the conference,[134] organised by Roberts in 1916, they did nothing about joining the Advisory Board.[135] The executive in Wellington persisted with its overtures,[136] but the local men remained suspicious. Many were convinced that the Advisory Board was merely the 'mask for the gun' - the militant menace remained behind the conciliatory exterior.[137]

During the war, Roberts and the other Wellington leaders retained cordial relations with the Christchurch TLC. They invited the Council's co-operation to help 'inaugurate a N.Z. Transport Workers' Federation'[138] on at least one occasion. For a time it looked as though Roberts might be prepared to compromise to the extent of allowing the city based, craft-supported Trades and Labour Councils to join his national organisation of industrially organised unskilled workers. However, soon after the end of the war there was a sudden re-appraisal. The transport workers, seamen

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132. Lyttelton Waterside Workers' Union Minutes 20 Jan 1916, Lyttelton Waterside Workers' Union Committee Minutes, 3 Jan 1916
133. Eg. Christchurch Tramway Workers' Union Minutes 6 Oct 9914
134. Ibid., 28 May 1916
135. Ibid., 30 Aug 1916
136. Ibid., 19 Jul 1917; T.L.C. Minutes 21 Jul 1917
137. S 13 Apr 1916, p.7, c.2
138. T.L.C. Minutes 21 Jul 1917

and miners took a unilateral decision to form the Alliance of Labour.[139] The UFL and the Trades and Labour Councils were left to fend for themselves. The pinnacle of the ambition of the Christchurch TLC by the middle of 1920 was 'to keep going, until ... we become a district Council for the Alliance of Labour.'[140]

The First World War therefore induced little change within the Christchurch TLC; it remained much as it was in early 1914 - a small collection of city craft unions preoccupied with the day-to-day running of their organisation. Industrial labour was very much the poor relation of the political wing of the movement in Christchurch during this era. Nevertheless, the TLC was an established labour institution. It had assets that had a life of their own; and it had traditions and stability that enabled it to weather the storms that threatened to wreck the more innovative, but less securely-established political structure after 1916.

In 1915, the local SDP appeared in Christchurch to be almost invincible. Its internal organisation was functioning smoothly and the political results were reinforcing morale and general party advance in the community. Then there was a sudden collapse in 1916: during 1917 and much of 1918, the political labour movement in Christchurch was disorganised, lacking local structure and national links.[141] Such a turn of events was wholly unexpected; those who did most to bring it about neither expected, nor appreciated the impact of their actions.

In 1915, when the Reform and Liberal partys formed a coalition, some of the labour representatives, including the two SDP members, decided to hold aloof, and work as a 'Labour Group' in opposition. There

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139. See H.O. Roth, Trade Unions in New Zealand, p.45

140. T.L.C. Annual Report, 1920

141. See Chapter IV, p.

were others within the labour movement of the country who disagreed. Notable among them was John Payne, the MP for Grey Lynn, who publicly debated the matter with Harry Holland, then editor of the Maoriland Worker. In general, Christchurch labour sided with Holland. While they might 'not endorse every sentence', his argument was more principled; it was 'cleaner and more correct, and backed by a stronger array of facts ....'[142] Payne, however, remained discontented. At the same time a number of Liberal MPs were becoming estranged from the leadership of their own party. George Witty, the member of Riccarton, declared that the Liberal party was 'as dead as Julius Ceasar'[143] and was bereft of effective leaders. Those in Wellington were just busy singing 'we're here because we're here',[144] declared Witty.

Several such disenchanted Liberals decided to work with Payne to form a new political party, for which they intended to appropriate the title 'Labour Party'. This prospect filled Christchurch labour leaders with the utmost alarm. Their own political organisation was experiencing internal problems over war-time issues, especially conscription, and they did not welcome the prospect of a rival to serve as a rallying point for the disaffected rank-and-file.[145] Sullivan addressed himself to the problem declaring that spurred on by the 'half-formed intention of certain Liberal Members of Parliament, assisted by Mr. Payne, to form a new Labour Party', certain 'prominent Labour men' had discussed the 'matter of the name under which our political Labour Party carries on business'.[146] The

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142. S 23 Oct 1915, p.12, c.3

143. Ibid., 11 Apr 1916, p.12, c.1

144. LT 10 Mar 1916, p.4, c.4

145. Cf. June Hunt 'The Development of the Labour Party in New Zealand as a political organisation from 1913 to 1919', unpublished M.A. Thesis, Auckland University College, Auckland, 1947. The moves of John Payne she says, had 'no particular significance', p.56

146. S 11 Apr 1916, p.12, c.1-2

name 'Labour' had long been dear to moderates within the New Zealand Labour movement; they had been so dubbing their political ventures for years. Militants on the other hand preferred something with a more doctrinnaire ring.

At the time of the 1913 national conference a compromise had been hammered out, Sullivan remembered that the 'SDP [sic] title was adopted as a compromise between the United Labour Party and the Socialist Party at the big Unity Conference .... Neither element at the time was willing to take the other fellow's name, and so the SDP resulted'.[147] Circumstances were very different now, three years later when Sullivan believed that it was 'foolish' to leave a 'name like "Labour Party" laying around to be picked up and used by political schemers'.[148] J.T. Paul, a leading figure in the Dunedin labour movement, who had argued for 'Labour' in 1913,[149] believed that inaction was 'dangerous'[150] in 1916. By the early months of that year the leaders of the Christchurch labour movement wanted the forthcoming conference of the SDP to discuss a change of name. 'It will be well if delegates to the next SDP conference will consider this matter in its practical bearing ' Sullivan wrote. Such a move would 'snuff out' John Payne.[151]

The SDP Conference did agree to the formation of the New Zealand Labour Party in 1916. Indeed, the Executive of the SDP had acquiesced several months earlier, when McCombs had been one of those appointed to draw up the circular proposing that 'the name be altered to the N.Z. Labour Party [sic]'.[152] It has been argued that the origins of the move to form

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147. S 11 Apr 1916, p.12, c.1
148. Ibid.
149. J.T. Paul, op.cit., p.35
150. S 25 Jul 1916, p.3,c.2
151. Ibid., 11 Apr 1916, p.12, c.2
152. J.T. Paul, op.cit., Appendix B., p.161

the New Zealand Labour Party lay in the desire of militants, like Harry Holland, to achieve unity. Holland during the early part of the First World War believed the collapse of capitalism imminent, and that the war demonstrated that the internal contradictions of capitalism were about to tear it apart. The hour of the working class was close and workers in New Zealand should prepare themselves. Holland was thus eager to compromise with other wings of the labour movement in order to achieve a coherent political organisation which could take control of the country, when the time came.[153]

The circumstances of the Labour Party's formation need, however, to be set in a regional as well as an ideological context. Holland may have indeed been motivated by a belief in a theoretical blue-print of world development. But the Christchurch labour movement was uninterested in theory, or at least determined that theoretical division should never stand in the way or destroy progress in the way that it had destroyed the Christchurch TLC before the war. Dan Sullivan wanted no 'insane bickerings' between militants and moderates over a change of name in 1916. He wanted no involvement in 'ridiculous and time wasting controversy'; time was too short for 'discussion of abstruse philosophical problems'.[154]

Christchurch Labour generally welcomed the formation of the Labour Party by the conference of 1916. Sullivan declared that as he had first suggested the change of name publicly some months earlier, he was 'naturally pleased'.[155] McCombs, who had been involved in the move from its inception, became president of the new party. His wife Elizabeth McCombs went on the Executive, along with Chris Webber,[156] another well-known unionist in Christchurch.

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153. See P.J. O'Farrell Harry Holland. Militant Socialist. Australian National University, Canberra, 1964, p.73-5

154. S 11 Apr 1916, p.12, c.2

155. Ibid., 15 Jul 1916, p.12, c.3

156. MW 12 Jul 1916, p.5, c.3

Ted Howard was one of the few local leaders of labour who declared himself opposed to the formation of the NZLP, and his opposition was to the change of name,[157] not to the new structure that had been given the new party. Like the rest of the labour leaders in Christchurch in July 1916 Howard saw the change made at conference as one of semantics only. At the Unity Conference of 1913, Ted Howard had been a Socialist Party leader, one of those against the acceptance of the 'homely title'[158] of Labour, with its distinctly 'moderate' connotations. It was this, a sentimental attachment to a radical past that motivated Howard's dislike for the new party, rather than any objections to its constitution or structure.

The Labour Party was set up to consist of a series of geographical Labour Representation Committees, to which all bodies who agreed with its principles could affiliate. It was intended that SDP branches would affiliate to their local LRC and thus be absorbed into the new party. In some centres, such a change and broadening of structure may have been necessary. Apart from the ideological convictions of the militant few like Harry Holland, it was clear at the 1916 SDP conference that there was considerable disorganisation and lethagy within the big city branches[159] other than Christchurch. The SDP in this centre was exceptional in the degree to which it had established itself both in the community and on political bodies. Christchurch believed it had solved its organisational problems and gave little consideration to the decision to form LRCs. In July 1916, that was seen as separate and secondary to the change of name.[160]

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157. General Labourers' Union Minutes, 18 Jul 1916

158. S 11 Apr 1916, p.12, c.1

159. MW 26 Jul 1916, p.2, c.3. It may indeed be significant that within the SDP Executive, it was McCombs who drew up the circular for the change of name, but Fraser and Tom Brindle, both North Island Labour men, who put forward the idea of the formation of Labour Representation Committees. See J.T. Paul, op.cit., Appendix B, p.161

160. S 15 Jul 1916, p.12, c.3

Sullivan saw nothing new, or threatening in the idea of the LRC, he merely considered it a reversion to the pre-war situation when the now defunct labour representation committee had done 'good work' although it left debts, still unpaid four years later.[161]

Although the labour leaders in Christchurch passed over the structural changes that were brought about by the formation of the Labour Party, it was these very structural changes that brought about the downfall of political labour in the city. The rank-and-file of the SDP in Christchurch saw no reason why their efficient, vigorous and eminently successful political party should suddenly be absorbed and obliterated by a new structure. Unanimously the local branches of the SDP refused to join the Labour Party or proceed with the formation of an LRC.[162] With one move, the political labour movement in Christchurch put itself outside the national organisation. Cut adrift in this way, political organisation in the city began to atrophy and by the time that the local body elections came around in early 1917, the District Council of the SDP was defunct. There was no organisation as in 1915 to hammer out labour's policy and platform.

At this point, the traditions of the TLC reasserted themselves. The Council stepped in and formed a Municipal Labour Representation Committee, modelled on the organisation that had fought local body elections in Christchurch before the formation of the SDP.[163] Invitations were issued to numerous groups and trade unions. Within a short time candidates had been selected and policy decided upon. McCombs was persuaded to lead the campaign,[164] although in fact the Municipal Labour Representation Committee was unaffiliated to the NZLP.

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161. S 15 Jul 1916, p.12, c.3
162. Eg. MW 4 Oct 1916, p.6,c.6, Riccarton branch
163. T.L.C. Minutes 3 Feb 1917
164. T.L.C. Minutes 3 Mar 1917

By the time of the first Annual Conference of the Labour Party, Christchurch labour was still estranged. Not one delegate was present from a Christchurch affiliate.[165] Events at the conference made the city's links with the national movement even more tenuous. McCombs resigned, both as President and as a member of the Labour Party when the conference adopted a position he considered too favourable to the liquor trade. Christchurch labour then had no formal connections with the Labour Party, either at grass-roots or executive level. By the middle of 1918, prospects of reconciliation seemed remote. In the two years since its formation the NZLP had undergone a great deal of development which had no parallel in Christchurch during the same period. In particular, the party had tackled from within problems of structure, control and organisation. Compared to the SDP, Labour had gone a long way towards becoming a truly national party. It had not gone the full distance, during the 1920s the tensions between the centre and the regional units of the party remained a continuing problem. But Labour had nevertheless machinery at its command to hold individuals and units in check, that were never present in the SDP. Development was such, that by the end of the war, tried and tested labour men in Christchurch faced the prospect of being unable to stand in the parliamentary elections as endorsed Labour candidates. Extra urgency was given to the whole question by the fact that the elections were already overdue by the end of the war; Labour expected them to be sprung on the public at almost any time.

By the closing months of 1918 the Municipal Labour Representation Committee was looking anxiously to the TLC for guidance. After a 'long and animated discussion'[166] delegates voted for affiliation: '... the

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165. MW 11 Jul 1917, p.5, c.5
166. T.L.C. Minutes 28 Sep 1918

majority seemed to agree that as there was a Labour Party we had better join up, because we had been in every party that had ever been formed up to now ....'[167] Once the TLC made such a decision, other city unions and political groups rapidly followed.[168] By the end of the year, a solid core were again within the political movement.

Without the TLC and its traditional commitment to politics, the political wing of the movement in Christchurch may not have survived the war intact. The faction-fighting that had exhausted energies in the pre-war years seemed again about to burst forth in 1916-17. It is difficult to imagine that any organisation other than the TLC could have stepped into the breach; certainly there were no signs of such a move from elsewhere. However, it was probably the last time the TLC was called upon to play such a role. After the war labour politics in Christchurch were very different to those of the era of the SDP; the TLC, neither large, nor part of a national industrial structure, did not loom large.

Moreover, the Labour Party of 1919 was a much more robust and independent political creature than the SDP of 1914-15. The fact that it had a Parliamentary wing, formidable in potential and expectation if not in present numbers, meant that Labour was a force in the city that could not be rivalled by the SDP. But the Labour Party differed from the Social Democratic Party in other ways. The SDP had been in many senses a proto-party. Although it had characteristics of organisation and independence that set it apart from any of its predecessors, it lacked maturity of political structure in other ways. The party had a narrow popular base. Branches were active only in the distinctively working-class areas of the city. Such total reliance upon working class support may have been a strength in the early days, since

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167. MW 9 Oct 1918, p.3, c.3

168. Eg. Christchurch Furniture Workers' Union Minutes, 11 Dec 1918; Iron and Brass Moulders' Union Minutes 10 Oct 1918; Plumbers' Union Minutes 6 Mar 1919

solidarity was easier to create when there were no conflicting class interests to overcome, but for a party aiming to grasp Parliamentary power it was ultimately a dead-end.

Such a party must win mass support. Where industrial workers do not make up the great mass of the population, the party must broaden its appeal. Christchurch was a highly stratified community, not a society which conformed to a model of two classes locked in ineluctable death-struggle. Workers were clearly aware of their identity as a community and of how their interests conflicted with those of the wealthy elite, but there was mobility within the working class and room for self improvement. The working class was itself stratified, separated into a hierarchy of income and status. Distinctively working class areas indeed existed and there was considerable residential, cultural and social segregation in Christchurch , but at the same time there were areas of the city with a broad occupational mix. In the north-east, and in the outlying areas fringing the industrial suburbs to the south, communities of aspiring tradesmen, self-employed businessmen and wage-earners both skilled and unskilled, flourished. In such a city, a Labour Party had to broaden its appeal to include these people if it wanted to win political power. During 1919, Christchurch Labour went a long way towards achieving this. By the time of the general elections there were party branches functioning in almost all parts of the city[169] and in some of the nearby rural centres.[170] Grass-roots enthusiasm in fact outstripped the party's resources.[171]

The growth of structure diminished the influence of personality.

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169. Eg. Islington LT 20 May 1919, p.1,c.7; Lyttelton Ibid., 27 May 1919 p.1, c.7; Hornby Ibid., 24 Mar 1919, p.1, c.6; Linwood MW 23 Oct 1919, p.5, c.5

170. Eg. Rangiora, Kaiapoi, MW 12 Mar 1919, p.5, c.3

171. MW 2 Oct 1915, p.5, c.6

Within the Social Democratic Party, personality was almost more important then organisation. For instance James McCombs, the founder of the powerful Woolston SDP was able to retain great control over the branch. He kept it out of the Labour Party after his resignation in July 1917 until he rejoined in October 1918. In the same speech that announced his own return to the fold, McCombs declared that 'the Woolston SDP of which I am a member had decided to link up with the N.Z. Labor Party [sic]...!'[172]

In 1919, Sullivan, Howard and McCombs were a powerful Christchurch contingent within the Parliamentary Labour Party, but they never rose to dominate it in the way that Christchurch had dominated the SDP. In 1915, Christchurch had had pretensions and aspirations to leadership of the SDP. With the accession of McCombs to the presidency of the NZLP in 1916, the city looked likely to fulfil this promise within the new party. But during the war, Christchurch Labour lost the initiative. Wedded to the old political structure, SDP branches would not switch to the new. With McCombs' resignation in 1917, power consolidated firmly in other hands in other centres. No individual from Christchurch held a top executive post within the Labour Party after McCombs. During the inter-war years, the Parliamentary Labour Party continued to tolerate a great deal of waywardness from its Christchurch bloc. McCombs, Sullivan and Howard remained ever ready to challenge the power and decision of the party's leaders[173] but they never repeated McCombs mistake of 1917 and pressed challenge to the point of rebellion. They well knew that party structure could survive the assault of the individual.

The knowledge that they had lost out in the power stakes of the NZLP during the First World War may have helped create within the group of

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172. MW 9 Oct 1919

173. See P.J. O'Farrell, op.cit., p.129-131

Christchurch-based Members of Parliament the sense of regional loyalty, tinged with sect-like solidarity that was in evidence after 1919. However, if this war-time experience helped create a consciousness of separation, other lessons learned at the same time more than held it in check. The problems thrown up by the war polarised the community and forced the labour movement to look inwards for strength and solutions. At the same time, these problems were of such a divisive nature, that the labour movement itself threatened to splinter under their pressure. Caught in the middle, struggling to hold their organisation together, Christchurch labour leaders were quickly and convincingly taught the political arts of compromise and toleration. In no issue was this more evident than that of conscription.

CHAPTER III:

LABOUR AND CONSCRIPTION

Conscription was probably the most difficult problem the labour movement had to face during the war. It attracted more controversy then, and since, than any other single issue. Some of those who later rose to prominence in the Labour Party believed that Labour's opposition to conscription in 1914-18 lost it support in 1919. John A. Lee was convinced that it cost votes in both Wellington and Christchurch. He pointed out that Labour made its biggest advances immediately after the war in Auckland and Dunedin, where opposition to conscription had been less vociferous. Others have suggested that the accusations that Labour was defeatist during the First World War, was a liability in the 1920s. Yet in Christchurch by 1919, Labour's opposition to conscription had become a definite boon to the party.[1]

Opposition to conscription was only one aspect of the local Labour Party's attitude to the war and it went hand-in-hand with other policies that won immense popular acclaim. Christchurch Labour argued that conscription was never necessary. The people of New Zealand were loyal and fearless; they would come forward voluntarily in more than sufficient numbers if the government would only treat enlisted men justly. Labour called for the conditions and pay of men at the front to be generous and for the pensions of servicemen and their dependents to be increased. Men willing to die for their country should be given the best.

By 1918, this part of Labour's policy had a wide appeal in Christchurch. War weariness had sapped jingoism of all its charm and the

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1. See Barry Selwyn Gustafson, op.cit., p.192-3

government's heavy-handed reactions to Labour's demands had produced a crop of martyrs for the party. During 1919, it became consequently extremely difficult to use conscription to make charges of disloyalty stick; Labour's enemies may well have done themselves a disservice in Christchurch by dwelling upon the issue.

At the same time, Christchurch labour took resistance to conscription further than the labour movement of any other New Zealand city during the war. Only in Christchurch was a local body campaign fought on the plank of conscription-repeal. Such a move was bold and unprecedented: municipal campaigns were traditionally centred on local issues, not national controversies. It was a decision that can be understood only in the light of the traditional strength of anti-militarism in the city.

Even before the turn of the century, there had been anti-war agitation. Tommy Taylor had been vigorously opposed to the Boer War and it cost him his seat in Parliament in 1899. When the first contingent of New Zealand troops was being despatched from Lyttelton 'Three groans for Tommy Taylor'[2] were given. But it was not in Taylor's nature to be deterred. Ten years later he led the local protest movement that objected to the gift by New Zealand of a dreadnought to the British navy. However, anti-militarist agitation in Christchurch consolidated, and became even more widespread and more vocal after the introduction of schemes of compulsory military training in 1909. Christchurch then became the centre-piece of New Zealand anti-militarism. The pride of her pacifists, the shame of her jingos.

The Christchurch Trades and Labour Council and several prominent

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2. Nellie F.H. Macleod The Fighting Man. A study of the Life and Times of T.E. Taylor, Dunbar and Summers, Christchurch, 1964, p.56

trade union leaders had supported Tommy Taylor,[3] but the whole labour movement became intimately involved in this resistance to compulsory military training. The TLC supplied money and speakers for almost every public meeting that was organised. It passed resolutions condemning the prosecutions of those who refused to drill and it called upon the government to rescind the legislation.[4] Among others, Dan Sullivan took a prominent role both within and outside the TLC[5] in pushing for these moves. Fred Burgoyne, who was President of the TLC in 1913 and one of the first SDP candidates elected to the City Council, was prosecuted and fined[6] for his part in the agitation. Within the TLC, the Engineers', Iron workers' and the General Labourers' unions[7] were especially zealous in pushing the Council into action. Both as leader of the general labourers and as leader of the Socialist Party, Ted Howard was well to the fore of the agitation and Fred Cooke, along with both his sons, was also prominent.[8]

Although the support of the labour movement in sustaining the resistance to compulsory military training should not be under-estimated, the agitation would never have achieved the proportions that it did, had it not been for the very active circle of non-labour radicals which existed in the city. They had been the backbone of local radicalism since at least the 1890s. Harry Atkinson and the Fabian Society took up the issue of compulsory drill. The Defence Act was seen by the Fabians

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3. Nellie F.H. Macleod, op.cit., p.108
4. Eg. T.L.C. Executive Minutes 22 Jul 1911, Ibid., 13 Jun 1912; T.L.C. Minutes 21 Nov 1912; LT 17 Mar 1913, p.9, c.5; Ibid., 1 Apr 1913, p.5, c.7-8
5. Eg. LT 1 Apr 1913, p.5, c.7-8
6. Eg. Ibid., 7 Apr 1913, p.5, c.5
7. Eg. Ibid., 6 Jul 1912, p.6, c.3-4, Ibid., 24 Jan 1913, p.9, c.5; T.L.C. Minutes 21 Nov 1912
8. Eg. LT 7 Mar 1912, p.9, c.6

as 'bringing militarism desperately fiercely into this New Country ....'[9] Only Eveline Cunnington had some reservations; her relations with the Society became strained in consequence. 'The Fabians are very much annoyed with me because I will not take a public stand ...'[10] she wrote. Harry Atkinson himself became more pre-occupied with anti-militarism than politics; he remained active in the post-war peace movement long after he had drifted away from party organising.[11]

If Eveline Cunnington held back from anti-militarism, other notable female figures in the city had no such inhibitions. The Canterbury Women's Institute had been formed as a pressure group for the enfranchisement of women, but it continued after 1893 to support other radical and non-feminist causes. During the First World War, it was led by Sarah Page and Ada Wells, both by this time middle-aged, but with undiminished enthusiasm for public activity. The two women were great friends, in spite of the difference in their backgrounds and circumstances.[12] Ada Wells was born in England in 1863 and emigrated to New Zealand in 1873. Settled in Christchurch, her radicalism soon began to find an outlet. She became the first secretary of the National Council of Women in 1890. She married and raised a family, but never allowed this to disbar her from political and social work. She was involved in the Children's Aid Society, and the short-lived Housewives Union, as well as the Canterbury Women's Institute in the years before the outbreak of war.[13] Sarah Page had been born in New Zealand. She came of an old,

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9. E.W. Cunnington, Letters, p.129
10. Ibid.
11. C.R.N. Mackie Papers, Correspondence Box 1-9. Atkinson was still active in 1931.
12. Ann Saunders, op.cit., p.20
13. 'Pioneer Women. First Secretary of the National Council' Woman Today 1 Jun 1937, p.50-1

established family; her father was Alfred Saunders, a prominent early politician of the country,[14] and her brother Sam Saunders, was editor of the Lyttelton Times until 1914.[15] During the 1914-18 war, Sarah Page lived in comfortable circumstances, her husband taught at the university[16] and they lived in Mays Road, Papanui, an affluent area of the town. Both Ada Wells and Sarah Page threw themselves into the agitation against compulsory military training. They were both regular speakers at rallies and protest meetings and contributed much to the overall organisation of the campaign. Their energy and determination at times horrified contemporaries, who considered such qualities unbecoming to ladies. The Editor of the Lyttelton Times, not Sam Saunders by this period, was shocked at their 'discourtesy' and their 'vulgar cries.'[17]

The introduction of compulsory military training with the Defence Act of 1909 did not mobilise only the established radical groups like the Fabians and the Women's Institute. It called into existence three groups dedicated solely to the overthrow of the legislation: the National Peace Council, the Anti-militarist League and the Passive Resisters' Union. The NPC and the Anti-Militarist League arose out of resistance within the Baptist churches to the complicity of the clergy in implementing compulsory military training. In 1911, the Liberal Government of Sir Joseph Ward appealed to clergymen to assist in the collection of the names of young men eligible for training. When agreement to this move was announced in the Oxford Terrace Baptist Church during a service, Charles Mackie rose and challenged the decision.

This was only the beginning of a campaign that became for Mackie

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14. Interview, Mrs. Robin Page, 14 Oct 1979
15. Canterbury Times Illustrated 10 Jun 1914, p.40
16. LT 1 Jun 1918, p.1, c.6
17. Ibid., 11 May 1912, p.10, c.5

a life-long commitment. He organised during 1911 a series of public meetings which were disturbed and sometimes broken up by the violent heckling of opponents but which culminated in early 1912 when the Anti-militarist League was formed with branches in Dunedin, Gore, Invercargill and Runanga. At the same time, the National Peace Council was convened in Christchurch, constituted out of all bodies in the community interested in securing the repeal of the Defence Act. The Fabians, the Canterbury Women's Institute, the Socialist Party, the TLC and some unions all sent delegates.[18] Charles Mackie became the secretary. From this key position, Mackie was responsible for the co-ordination of a vigorous campaign.

Charles 'Royal Navy' Mackie,[19] as he was jokingly called by his friends, came from a wealthy background. His family had owned land in Linwood and during the war, he and his wife Ellen still lived in the area. They owned a graceful house in the elevated part of the suburb that lay near the Avon River and the tree-lined Linwood Avenue.[20] Mackie was a small, dapper man with a clipped beard, well spoken and highly educated. He was able to devote himself almost entirely to the anti-militarist cause, freed from the necessity for any other occupation by the security of a private income.[21]

Although Charles Mackie was inspired largely by religious motives, the churches generally did not rally to the anti-militarist cause. The Anglicans condemned all resistance to compulsory military training, a measure which they believed 'calculated to secure our national safety,

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18. This account is based on 'National Peace Council. Report since Inception' 15 Oct 1915, Mackie Papers, no. 41
19. Interview, Mrs. Robin Page, 14 Oct 1979
20. Wises New Zealand Post Office Directory, Wise and Co. [N.Z.] Ltd., 1917, p.1615
21. Interview, Mrs. Lincoln Efford, 18 Oct 1979

and, ... promote moral and physical well-being ...'[22] The Quakers were the only church group to give support, but they were very few in number[23] and were probably more important in sustaining the morale of the few religious pacifists in the city than converting the general public. During the war, Charles Mackie and his wife Ellen, drifted away from their own Baptist Church, to the more sympathetic atmosphere of the Friends.[24] Some Methodist clergy in Christchurch took indeed a strong line against military training before the war,[25] but they did not carry this opposition over to wartime conscription.

Charles Murray, the Presbyterian minister in Sydenham, was alone in this. He was present at almost every pre-war protest meeting, inspired by and expounding pacifist convictions which he held to firmly throughout the war.[26] He was not supported by the main body of Presbyterian clergy. The Presbytery gave NPC deputations an unwilling and unresponsive hearing.[27]

However, if most religious groups in the community did not support the pre-war anti-militarists, the anti-militarists themselves were inspired by a fervour and energy almost religious in its intensity. The National Peace Council published and distributed over half a million pamphlets in the two years of its existence before the war. It also put out handbills, produced a monthly circular and organised weekly rallies in the Square.[28] By comparison, the Anti-militarist League

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22. LT 23 Oct 1913, p.5, c.4
23. Report of the General Meeting 1917. Lists less than a dozen Quaker families in Christchurch.
24. Interview, Miss Mary Thorne
25. Eg. President of Primitive Methodist Conference, LT 10 Jan 1911, p.11, c.1; Rev. D. McNicoll, Ibid., 11 Mar 1912, p.4, c.5
26. Eg. LT 30 May 1913, p.9, c.5
27. LT 10 Jul 1913, p.3, c.4
28. National Peace Council Report Since Inception, 15 Oct 1915, Mackie Papers No. 41

remained only a small organisation but made its presence felt through the energy of its leader, John P.F. Fletcher. An English Quaker, Fletcher had spent some time in Australia, where he was involved in the formation of Freedom Leagues, throughout the country. These Leagues, formed to resist compulsory military training were later important as cells of early resistence to the introduction of conscription in war-time.[29] Fletcher spent about a year in New Zealand before he returned to Australia shortly before the war. He toured the country extensively during that year, but Christchurch was his base, and he led the Anti-militarist League on a vigorous street-corner campaign in Sydenham during which he was arrested, fined and imprisoned.[30] After Fletcher left the country in 1913, the Anti-militarist League flagged and there was little sign of activity during the early months of 1914.

The Passive Resisters' Union was a much stronger body. Organised by the young men of the city who refused to drill, the Union had over 450 members in Christchurch alone.[31] There were as well branches on the West Coast coalfields and in some rural areas of Canterbury.[32] The campaign waged by the PRU was more exuberant and less conventional than that of the NPC. The PRU leaders more than a little enjoyed themselves in the glare of publicity that their agitation induced. They enjoyed making the authorities look ridiculous. The PRU declared that a Boer War maxim gun on display in the city was an 'immoral example' since it

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29. See L.C. Jauncey, The Story of Conscription in Australia. Melbourne, 1968, p.68, 80

30. LT 11 Mar 1912, p.4, c.5

31. Canterbury Women, p.139

32. See Repeal eg 12 Mar 1914, p.5, Marshland; Ibid., 11 Feb 1914, East Oxford; Ibid., 11 Feb 1914, p.10, Kaiapoi; Ibid., 7 Oct 1913, p.7, Rangiora; Ibid., 2 May 1913, p.15, West Coast.

'might have been used to kill some New Zealanders'.[33] When it was found one morning in the Avon River, the Union delighted in both the joke and the impossibility of detection.[34]

The members of the PRU were confident and lively protesters. One of the most notable was Reg Williams. He came from a family with a history of political activity. His older brother, Morgan Williams, was a small farmer at Kaiapoi, but was most unrepresentative of this group. He had emigrated from England where he had belonged to the Independent Labour Party[35] and upon settling in Canterbury had become involved with other farmers in fighting the organisation of farm labourers.[36] His ideas underwent a sudden radicalisation soon after however, and he switched sides to become one of the earliest and most enthusiastic workers for the local SDP in 1913. Morgan Williams was in close contact with Charles Mackie and the NPC,[37] organising the campaign against compulsory drill in the rural areas near Christchurch. While his brother fought in the country, Reg Williams stormed the town. He published the Repeal,[38] the magazine produced by the PRU to document and publicise its activities. Reg Williams had a keen nose for publicity. More than once he evaded arrest for non-payment of fines only to ensure it next day by appearing at public meetings in heavy and conspicuous disguise. In a felt hat 'as distinct from the cloth cap of the brotherhood' and with the 'premature appendage' of a huge false moustache, Williams

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33. LT 9 Jul 1912, p.4, c.8
34. Ibid., 6 Sep 1912, p.4, c.4
35. MW 24 May 1916, p.5, c.3
36. Eg. Ibid., 10 Dec 1913, p.6, c.4. Williams later had considerable problems explaining his change of heart. Eg. Ibid., 20 Nov 1919, p.8, c.5
37. Eg. Mackie Papers, no. 225
38. See the Repeal.

made sure both of his arrest, and of a newspaper write-up.[39]

Not that the PRU's sense of fun meant that the business in hand had no serious consequences. In 1913 the government decided to incarcerate the recalcitrant leaders in a military fortress on Ripa Island in Lyttelton Harbour. With Reg Williams again to the fore the group decided to go on a hunger strike as a protest against general conditions and the specific requirement to undertake military work; ' ... we are prepared to starve to death unless we return to our old conditions ... We all absolutely refuse to clean or handle any armaments of munitions of war.'[40] One of the group became seriously ill. A letter was smuggled out to the Unity Conference meeting in Wellington and the delegates decided en masse to march to Parliament and demand action from the government. The Prime Minister, Bill Massey, was embarrassed and angered by the incident but at the same time he had no wish to create martyrs. Conditions were changed and the charges of insubordination laid against the PRU leaders were dropped.[41]

Nevertheless, many members of the PRU suffered for the stand they took up. As well as continual fines and imprisonment, a number lost their civil rights. Only a few days before the outbreak of war, these prosecutions were continuing.[42] The PRU continued doggedly on however, and when the war broke, Williams was touring the North Island, sending back excited reports of his successful meetings. In Christchurch, passions were rising and the PRU rallies were being disrupted through the 'determined, programmed opposition by a certain few.'[43]

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39. LT 31 Mar 1913, p.5, c.7

40. Ibid., 3 Jul 1913, p.9, c.6

41. Ibid., 5 Jul 1913, p.14, c.2; Ibid., p.11, c.8; Ibid., 24 Jul 1913, p.5, c.5

42. Eg. H. Cooke deprived of civil rights for three years, Ibid., 23 Jan 1913, p.5, c.7, Reg Williams deprived of civil rights for two years, Ibid., 1 Mar 1913, p.9, c.5; C.L. Beary deprived of civil rights for three years, 3 Jul 1914, National Peace Council, Report Since Inception,' 15 Oct 1915, Mackie Papers no. 41

43. C.R.N. Mackie to Reg Williams 15 Jun 1914, Mackie Papers, No.225

The labour movement supported the pre-war agitation against compulsory military training but the leadership came from outside. During the war however, those who had led that agitation looked more and more to labour to lead resistance to war time conscription. Labour possessed an institutional strength that enabled it to carry on while the anti-militarist organisations reeled and collapsed under the blow.

On 11 August, in the closing hours of peace the Christchurch anti-militarists held their last meeting. All the well-known leaders were there - John Fletcher, Charles Murray, Reg Williams, Ted Howard and Fred Cooke. All were concerned about the ominous international situation and the meeting called upon the government not to 'incite our young men ... to leave the Dominion to take part in a European war.'[44] But worst fears were soon realised. War was declared, and the PRU and Anti-militarist League promptly collapsed. Anti-militarist League members believed that the whole drift of international events proved their point, the fallacy of the old adage 'If you want peace, prepare for war' but members decided that they could no nothing. Activity would only 'add to or encourage local strife at this particular time of grave international crisis.'[45]

Many members of the PRU volunteered for the front.[46] A great number of those who had supported resistance to compulsory military training had done so because they regarded it as an infringement of traditional British freedom, fought for and won over centuries. The Briton's right to freedom from militarism and conscription was, in their view, comparable to freedom of speech and conscience. Germany was the supreme example of all they hated most: protagonist of a policy of 'blood and iron', leading militarist and conscriptionist power, she was

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44. MW 12 Aug 1914, p.2, c.4

45. LT 14 Aug 1914, p.2, c.7

46. H.O. Roth 'Hell, No, We won't go!' New Zealand Monthly Review XI [116] Oct 1970, p.20-2

continually held up as the worst of all possible futures.[47] Seeing the issue as defence of British freedoms, winning the war against Germany seemed more important in 1914 than opposing the Defence Act, and many PRU members went immediately to the fight. Theirs was an argument against compulsion and for freedom of conscience, not with war as such.

The National Peace Council also ceased public agitation after the declaration of war: ' ... it was decided to suspend ... all public meetings as soon as it was apparent that the community had been infected with the war fever ....'[48] Members still looked to each other for support and a small study circle was established but there was an air of despair. Charles Mackie wrote to a friend of the 'fearful thing to see how eager men become to go out and slaughter ... how hopelessly inadequate our present civilization is ....'[49]

The NPC did undergo some revival during the war, but it was never again to reach anything like its pre-war level of activity. Once the Council began to receive 'definite and authentic news' dissemination of propaganda again became important. Harry Holland was to get much of the information he used in his war-time pamphlets from Charles Mackie[50] but generally the NPC recognised that it had to lay low in war. It knew that this silence would be regarded as 'lack of progressive efforts' by some, but most members believed any existence was better than being entirely suppressed by the authorities.[51] Rather than take on the government and the pro-war forces in the community themselves, the anti-militarists in Christchurch by 1917 turned to work through the political

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47. See the Repeal, passim
48. N.P.C. Annual Report, 1915, Mackie Papers, No. 41
49. C.R.N. Mackie to Holdsworth, 7 Aug 1914, Mackie Papers
50. H.E. Holland to C.R.N. Mackie 1 Dec 1915, Mackie Papers. He later gave Charles Mackie complimentary copy of some pamphlets, Interview Mrs. Lincoln Efford, 18 Oct 1979
51. N.P.C. Annual Report 1918, Mackie Papers, No. 41

labour movement.

The initial reaction of the SDP to the outbreak of war in 1914 had not offered anti-militarists much joy. In the excited atmosphere of its declaration, there was not time to convene the National SDP Executive, the members of which were scattered throughout the North and South Islands. Hiram Hunter, as President, took the initiative in Christchurch.[52] He declared the party 'neutral' but nevertheless threw himself into patriotic activity. He led demonstrations, and declared to enthusiastic audiences that where he had once advocated 'My class, right or wrong', his cry was now 'My country, right or wrong'.[53] Harry Holland's family believed that Hunter had gone 'jingo-mad'.[54]

There were still some within the party who opposed the war. Ted Howard and Fred Cooke for instance believed that the whole business was a cynical exercise by capitalists for their own ends: 'What matters if civilization is destroyed' asked Fred Cooke, 'There are guns to sell. There are ships to sell. There are contracts to be had. There are thousands of surplus population to be destroyed quickly ....'[55] Behind the scenes, there were some within the local labour movement who harboured an even stronger sense of alienation from the community's general enthusiasm for the war. John McCullough that old stalwart of the political labour movement in Christchurch wrote privately that he was 'unable to raise a particle of enthusiasm for the war....'[56] But such declarations were neither widespread nor public. Cooke, for instance, did not reiterate on any public platform in Christchurch what he had written for the pages of the Maoriland Worker. Moreover, the labour

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52. Owen Gager, 'The New Zealand Labour Movement and War, 1914-1918'. Unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of Auckland, Auckland, 1962. p.18-9
53. LT 7 Aug 1914, p.10, c.4
54. Allan to Stella, 9 Aug 1914, O'Farrell M.S. Holland Papers.
55. MW 5 Aug 1914, p.3, c.4
56. Diary Vol V 26 Jul 1916, J.A. McCullough Papers

newspaper itself steered a middle course of cautious loyalty: 'Our work is not to assist in so-called patriotic demonstrations although we must not stand on the side of the enemy'.[57] John McCullough's own family did not share his misgivings. One of his sons soon volunteered, much to his father's consternation. It 'has been to me a great mystery I have been unable to get any satisfaction from him as to what induced him to do it ... I don't think he could give a satisfactory reason other than that he was looking for excitement.'[58]

The general elections came three months after the outbreak of war, but by then the SDP in Christchurch did not concentrate upon war issues in its campaign. The Press, sympathetic to the Reform government of W.F. Massey did its best to make the campaign a khaki election and went as far as to declare that if the Reform Government was defeated, the Germans would deduce that New Zealand's heart was not truly in the battle.[59] But the SDP candidates were not to be drawn. Hiram Hunter had evidently overcome the ebullience of his initial jingo outbursts. James McCombs felt it was really too much to expect that the people should even be interested in domestic issues at such a time of 'tremendous struggle'. He said little about the war itself other than express pious hopes for a quick and lasting settlement.[60]

In August 1914, Dan Sullivan had been almost as enthusiastic about the war as Hiram Hunter; he had attended the inaugural meeting of the Patriotic Committee and had been added to the Executive.[61] Yet Sullivan was the only Christchurch SDP candidate to have trouble during the election campaign with the labour movement's pre-war record of resistance

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57. MW 19 Aug 1914, p.4, c.2
58. Diary Vol V 26 Jul 1916, J.A. McCullough Papers
59. LT 30 Nov 1914, p.7, c.6
60. Eg. Ibid., 19 Nov 1914, p.8, c.3
61. Ibid., 7 Aug 1914, p.10, c.7

to compulsory military training. His opponent, George Russell, the Liberal MP for Avon tried to make capital out of the issue. Sullivan was publicly, but anonymously, accused of being a political opportunist. Before war was declared this faceless critic wrote, Sullivan had been an anti-militarist but now he was 'cute enough to see that the public will not tolerate to-day any of the Red Fed anti-militaristic kidney and so he has jettisoned his principles.'[62] George Russell, furthermore, pointed out that Sullivan had, in 1909, been in favour of military training and only later changed his mind.[63]

Dan Sullivan protested he was not the cynical operator that his enemies represented however. He admitted having at first been in favour of drill. He had changed his mind because he saw that the law caused the 'imprisonment and disfranchisement of thousands of young men, he realised that it was not a democratic position.'[64] Sullivan was neither pacifist nor anti-war, but he wanted voluntary military service. The Patriotic Committee aimed to boost recruitment by improving conditions and facilities for servicemen. Sullivan therefore believed it was not against his principles to assist in the Committee's work. He 'resented' the reflections that had been cast on him and his party. Furthermore, he said, Social Democrats would never be 'foolish enough' to tamper with the Defence Act in wartime, even if every one of them were elected.[65] Nevertheless, the anti-militarist agitation in Christchurch had been so great during the pre-war years, that Sullivan had become convinced that a large section of the public was wholly opposed to compulsion for military service. He believed that 'if an election were fought on the question or a referendum was taken the anti-militarists would poll a huge majority ...

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62. LT 7 Aug 1914, p.10, c.7
63. Ibid., 27 Nov 1914, p.9, c.3-4
64. P 28 Nov 1914, p.10, c.3
65. LT 19 Nov 1914, p.8, c.5

the Act would have been swept away together with the Government that passed it.'[66] These convictions were to shape his attitude to military conscription.

In the first few months of war, there was no hint that conscription might be introduced. Recruitment was still in the hands of voluntary agencies. When the Defence Department took over in February 1915, the then Minister of Defence, James Allen claimed that recruiting was 'going on excellently.'[67] By May, however, the situation was beginning to change. Allen made appeals for more men[68] and the newspapers began to speak anxiously about the 'urgent need' for men and money.[69] Editors quoted with approval the moves towards military conscription made by other countries. The Lyttelton Times saw the National Registration Bill in Britain as preparation for 'compulsion for industrial and military service' and declared that there was little doubt the 'traditional voluntary principle' would have to be abandoned.[70]

In July when the Australian Government decided to take a war census, Allen announced that it would probably be the model for the one that 'sooner or later' would be taken in New Zealand. The Lyttelton Times saw in such a census the germ 'not only of compulsory military service but of compulsory general service.'[71] Only a few weeks later a similar measure was announced by the New Zealand Government, but without the provisions of the Australian Act for assessing wealth.

In view of the course of events in other countries, and the inferences that had been made about them, the decision to take a war

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66. LT 21 Oct 1912, p.3, c.3
67. Ibid., 18 Feb 1915, p.7, c.8
68. Ibid., 26 May 1915, p.6, c.8
69. Ibid., 10 May 1915, p.6, c.2-3
70. Ibid., 15 Jul 1915, p.6, c.1
71. Ibid., 28 Jul 1915, p.6, c.2

census was a clear sign that the government intended to introduce conscription. It was too late in the day for the newspapers to convincingly argue that requirements such as compulsory medical examination did not even 'remotely imply conscription'.[72] All the pre-war anti-militarist groups were alarmed and alerted. The Canterbury Women's Institute declared that the move was 'undoubtedly for the purpose of aiding and abetting militarism' and that the end result would be the abolition of the people's liberty.[73] The National Peace Council began to contact and circularise the trade unions, but the labour movement was already thoroughly alarmed. Newspapers had emphasised the opinions of a group of Auckland unionists who greeted the National Registration with approval.[74] In Christchurch, however, the mood was very different.

Unions had differed widely in their reaction to the declaration of war. The railwaymen decided to outfit their own Railway Expeditionary Corps; men who volunteered were to be put on half-pay in addition to military wages.[75] In contrast, tramway workers refused donations to the patriotic fund raising committees[76] and the watersiders decided not to make a presentation to their own men who were leaving with the first contingent.[77]

There had been some limited contact with the German labour movement before the war. In 1913 the German Consul had visited the Christchurch TLC and given an address about the German Social Democratic Party.[78] At its next meeting, the TLC had endorsed the Hardie-Vailant Resolution,[79]

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72. LT 8 Sep 1915, p.6, c.2
73. MW 15 Sep 1915, p.4, c.4
74. LT 30 Aug 1915, p.8, c.7
75. Ibid., 17 Aug 1914, p.11, c.6
76. Christchurch Tramway Workers' Union Minutes 8 Sep 1914
77. Lyttelton Waterside Workers' Union Minutes, 17 Aug 1914
78. T.L.C. Minutes 13 Feb 1913
79. Ibid., 27 Feb 1913

which called upon workers to impose a general strike in the event of war. The General Labourers' Union also endorsed the idea,[80] but there were no moves in that direction when war actually was declared eighteen months later.

However, during 1915 the mounting evidence that the government intended to introduce conscription, worried almost all unions. The industrial labour movement feared that the war census was a prelude to military conscription which in turn would lead to industrial conscription and the direction of manpower. Many unionists therefore believed that the government was striking at the very basis of the trade union movement. There were anxious discussions in a number of the city unions. Henry Worrall took the initiative in the General Labourers' Union. Worrall had been involved in the pre-war resistance to compulsory military training and had become a good friend of John Fletcher,[81] the man who energetically led the Anti-militarist League during his stay in Christchurch. One of Henry Worrall's sons had been a leader of the PRU and a friend of Reg Williams. Worrall urged the union to take some action and made some public statements. Compulsion 'struck definitely' at the roots of trade unionism he reminded members and not one spoke in favour of the war census. It was unanimously decided that Worrall, Frank Lurch and Ted Howard should draft a protest resolution for release to the press.[82] Such events were being repeated in unions throughout the city,[83] and in response to appeals from many of its affiliates, the TLC held a special open meeting to discuss options for action.[84]

The United Federation of Labour had already brought its bigger guns in to play. The National Executive was located in Christchurch that year,

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80. General Labourers' Union Minutes, 26 Feb 1913
81. J.P.F. Fletcher - C.R.N. Mackie 22 Mar 1915, Mackie Papers, no.87
82. General Labourers' Union Minutes 31 Aug 1915
83. Eg. Engineers, T.L.C. Minutes 9 Sep 1915
84. Ibid., 11 Sep 1915; Ibid., 15 Sep 1915

and Hiram Hunter, as president, wrote an open letter of protest to the government expressing the industrial movement's interpretation and fears. It was 'conscription pure and simple', declared Hunter, a 'breach of faith' to the volunteers at the front and a 'lever for the introduction of militarism'. It was designed to throw the burden of the war upon the workers by 'making them fight the battles ... foot the bill and at the same time rob them of their freedom'.[85] Alienation had grown rapidly within the industrial labour movement, symbolised by the shift in Hunter's opinions. He who had been amongst the most uncritical of jingos in August 1914 was only a year later leading labour's opposition to the war effort.

The local press reacted sharply to the pronouncements of the UFL. Hunter was castigated for his 'nonsense and stupidly illogical statements'.[86] Union opposition to the measure however continued to consolidate.[87] Fears were not allayed by the actions of employers and the government over the next few weeks. The Tramways Board made a transparent attempt to use Hunter's supposed 'disloyalty' to get rid of him when he took a hard line in negotiations. Even the Lyttelton Times saw through this move and declared that the Board had blundered 'badly and seriously'.[88] There were ominous signs that the government was equally ready to move with a heavy hand against all who opposed it. George Russell, who had become a minister in the war-time coalition government that was convened in August 1915, issued open threats. He promised 'an unpleasant surprise' for all

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85. LT 8 Sep 1915, p.6, c.2

86. Ibid., p.6, c.6

87. Eg. Lyttelton Waterside Workers' Union Minutes, 20 Sep 1915; Canterbury Printers' Machinists, MW 22 Sep 1915, p.4, c.6; Christchurch Tramway Workers' Union Minutes, 30 Sep 1915; Timberyard Workers, MW 8 Oct 1915, p.2, c.6; Drivers, Ibid., Plumbers T.L.C. Minutes 9 Oct 1915

88. LT 27 Oct 1915, p.6, c.2

men who were not prepared to go to the front.[89] At the same time the government put the National Peace Council under surveillance. Charles Mackie's mail was censored and union protests were dismissed - it was simply 'one of the regrettable necessities imposed by the present state of war'[90] was the official answer. Union resentment grew when another well known local unionist and anti-militarist was dismissed from his employment because of his opinions about the war and conscription.[91]

A crisis atmosphere was beginning to build up. Labour's reaction was to actively produce some counter to the government's apparent intention to go ahead with conscription. Organisers began circulating among the city unions proselytising and stiffening resistance.[92] The UFL decided to call a national Anti-Conscription Conference for January 1916. Over 87 organisations were represented and Christchurch sent a bigger contingent of delegates than any other city.[93] The conference issued a bold manifesto, declaring that conscription would be 'inimicable to the best interests of the nation and the potentialities of the race .... There must be no surrender of principles that have raised British citizenship above serfdom.'[94] The UFL called upon the government to instead put effort into making voluntary enlistment work; this could be done the conference believed, by improving the conditions and pay of servicemen.[95] Hiram Hunter declared that the manifesto represented the feelings of workers 'both organised and unorganised throughout the Dominion.'[96]

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89. LT 12 Nov 1915, p.5, c.3
90. T.L.C. Minutes, 4 Dec 1915; Ibid., 19 Feb 1916
91. Ibid., 22 Jan 1916; Ibid., 5 Feb 1916
92. Eg. James Thorn toured unions, T.L.C. Minutes 4 Dec 1915
93. MW 2 Feb 1916, p.4, c.5
94. UFL Manifesto, LT 29 Jan 1916, p.11, c.6
95. Ibid.
96. Ibid., 1 Feb 1916, p.4, c.3.

But the Government was not to be deflected from its course. In April[97] the Prime Minister, Massey, announced that he would introduce conscription. In Christchurch, there was an immediate outcry. Sarah Page wrote to the government on behalf of the Canterbury Women's Institute, accusing cabinet of 'filching' traditional freedoms, and of trying to 'break the spirit' of the men and boys of the Dominion. Massey snapped back that women had no business to pass 'abstract resolutions' when the country was faced with a 'devilish foe'; rather they should be working to 'strengthen the hands of government'.[98] George Russell, the only other minister to reply was plainly contemptuous of the 'idealistic and impracticable proposals ... of your institute.'[99]

The Government's determination took the impetus out of the unions' resistance. There was public confidence but private despair in trade union circles. The continued passing of resolutions,[100] discussions of 'monster petitions'[101] and 'massive demonstrations'[102] was good for morale, but little action was taken. Faced with Massey's unalterable determination to persist with military conscription, the unions were checkmated. By the time the UFL held its Annual Conference in July 1916, there was widespread demoralisation. Delegates debated the whole issue at length, trying to devise some means of effective action. They considered balloting unions throughout the country to see if they were prepared to take a 'week's holiday' when the law was implemented. Bob Semple wanted a general strike. The other delegates found themselves agreeing. But then, surprised at their own temerity, immediately rescinded their decision. Ted Howard reported back to his union that the discussions had been 'long

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97. LT 22 Apr 1916, p.8, c.8
98. Ibid., 29 Apr 1916, p.4, c.3
99. Ibid., 26 Apr 1916, p.5, c.7
100. Ibid., 3 Jun 1916, p.10, c.4
101. T.L.C. Minutes 27 May 1916
102. Lyttelton Waterside Workers Union, Committee Minutes, 30 Jun 1916

and bitter' and that 'no one could see a way' to defeat conscription.[103]

The initiative began to shift to the political wing of the labour movement. During the first year of the war while the unions had set the pace in the move against conscription, the political leaders were divided or only guardedly critical. James McCombs and Dan Sullivan objected not to the idea of conscription, but of the form that it took. McCombs at first declared that he was not opposed to 'a reasonable war census' along the lines of the Australian or British models. 'In a state where the workers have been taught to read and write' he declared, 'the Nationalisation of Capital must precede the Nationalisation of flesh and blood.'[104] This call was echoed by Sullivan.[105]

At the same time, splits were beginning to appear. Some of those who had been longest and most prominent in the local political labour movement came out openly for conscription. Robert Spiers was one. Spiers had been born in Scotland, the son of a miner and had emigrated to New South Wales to work in the mines there. He had then become involved in the Salvation Army and in 1888 came to Christchurch as a full-time organiser to take charge of the six or seven hundred Salvationists in the city. He soon went into business and by the outbreak of the First World War he was self-employed, a Justice of the Peace, and a member of the St. Albans School Committee. In 1912, Spiers had joined the ULP in Christchurch and in 1913 switched to the SDP, leading its local body campaigns that year and in 1915.[106]

During the closing months of 1915, Spiers began to advocate conscription. He believed that it was a fairer means of selecting men than the informal social pressures that operated under voluntary systems.[107]

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103. General Labourers' Union Minutes, 18 Jul 1916
104. MW 22 Sep 1915, p.4, c.4-5
105. Eg. Christchurch Furniture Workers' Union Minutes, 13 Oct 1915
106. S 6 Mar 1915, p.12, c.1-2
107. Ibid., 2 Oct 1915, p.12, c.2-3

John McCullough was horrified that such opinions should be expressed by prominent figures. 'It seems incredible that leading Labour men [sic] should so far forget themselves as to talk this way' he wrote.[108] In his labour column in the Sun, Dan Sullivan tried to steer a middle course, He gave on the one hand a report of Robert Spiers opinions and the enthusiasm of W.H. Holman in New South Wales for the war, and on the other defended the stand of outright opposition taken up by Ramsay MacDonald and the labour group within the British Parliament.[109]

In Christchurch during 1915, the political wing of the labour movement was holding on to its unity only by concentrating on common ground, and ignoring divisions. It was generally agreed in public that the war must be won, the 'desire to see the Allies victorious is practically unanimous'[110] and that voluntary recruiting was in principle preferable to conscription. Even when the UFL called an Anti-Conscription conference in January 1916, the issue in Dan Sullivan's eyes was not how to resist the government's introduction of conscription, but rather 'whether it is a right thing for the unions and their officials to turn themselves into recruiting agents ... a question upon which there is much division ....'[111] As it became increasingly evident that the government would inevitably introduce conscription, the Christchurch labour leaders' resistance to the form that it took stiffened and their desire to make voluntary recruiting work, became almost frantic. Labour's political leaders in Christchurch threw themselves into recruiting at a time when the industrial leaders refused to have any part of it. Dan Sullivan and James McCombs attended recruiting meetings week after week.[112] Sullivan's

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108. Diary Vol V 14 Oct 1915, J.A. McCullough Papers

109. S 16 Oct 1915, p.12, c.1-2

110. Ibid., 15 Jan 1916, p.12, c.1

111. Ibid.

112. Eg. McCombs at Sumner, LT 17 Feb 1916, p.8, c.2; Sullivan added to Executive of the Citizens Defence Corps, Ibid., 7 Nov 1916, p.8, c.4; Ibid., 21 Mar 1916, p.9, c.4-5

brother volunteered,[113] McCombs privately told his family that although he was now over age and unfit, he would never have become a conscientious objector. He had once served as a volunteer and would have been happy in 1914 to serve in a medical corps.[114] J.J. Graham, the SDP mayor of Woolston, did volunteer, anxious to show by example, that in fighting the 'leading conscriptionist Power in the World', New Zealand need not herself have recourse to such measures.[115] An SDP member of the City Council declared in public that he was ready to 'do his part'. His only son had already volunteered.[116]

In the City Council, labour men did all that was possible to make voluntary recruiting schemes more effective. On labour's initiative the Council resolved itself into a recruiting body in early 1916.[117] Labour representatives redoubled their efforts and James McCombs became especially ingenious in finding ways to extend its activities. He wanted the Council to promise to supplement the pay of men who undertook to go to the front.[118] He and Sullivan wanted postal workers to assist in recruiting[119] and McCombs tried to get the mayor to emulate American schemes whereby whole towns bonded themselves to raise a certain number of men within a specified time.[120]

McCombs determination to pursue recruiting in this fashion became almost bizarre. It was as though, faced with the inevitability of conscription, he preferred to throw himself into recruiting in order to avoid the ultimate reality of total opposition. McCombs said he hoped

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113. LT 21 Nov 1916, p.8, c.4
114. Interview, Sir Terence McCombs 12 Dec 1978
115. MW 20 Oct 1915
116. LT 21 Nov 1916, p.8, c.4
117. Ibid., 29 Feb 1916, p.6, c.2
118. CCC Minutes 6 Nov 1916
119. LT 14 Mar 1916, p.8, c.4
120. Ibid., 21 Nov 1916, p.8, c.4

that his schemes would 'not only give an example in New Zealand but might show the way out of the deadlock in Australia' - where the movement was becoming bitterly divided over the issue. Dan Sullivan was also 'captivated' by that idea but other labour men on the Council were beginning to have reservations about McCombs' strategy. James McCullough, John McCullough's brother, 'did not like it' but was prepared to do anything that might help recruiting. Other labour Councillors felt that the numbers involved were insignificant, but that anything was better than nothing at all.[121] Nevertheless, such schemes did seem more than a little futile in view of the continual, dramatic fall-off in the numbers of men coming forward. Some days in Christchurch only one or two men signed up.[122] It seemed likely that the city would have to default on its quota; the Mayor, Henry Holland, was horrified at the prospect. It was, he said 'the most serious crisis in the history of the war'. To avoid the 'stigma' of default he redoubled his recruiting efforts.[123] By the end of 1916 most Christchurch citizens believed conscription to be inevitable.

The efforts of the Christchurch labour leaders to assist with voluntary recruiting did them little good in the eyes of their enemies since at the same time they became ever more closely associated with opposition to conscription. James McCombs had fought the Military Service Bill through every one of its Parliamentary stages. Most of MPs from Christchurch had made some criticisms of the provisions in the Bill but McCombs had been alone in voting against it.[124] At the last moment McCombs tried to hold up the Military Service Bill by stopping the Governor's assent. McCombs believed that the Bill was

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121. LT 7 Nov 1916, p.7, c.3
122. Ibid., 3 Nov 1916, p.5, c.2
123. Ibid., 4 Nov 1916, p.4, c.4
124. P.D. 1916 Vol. 175

unconstitutional, but was proved wrong.[125] Moreover, he was one of the labour leaders who signed the telegram sent to assist the 'No' campaign of the first Australian conscription referendum and this drew the anger of Christchurch conservatives: the Citizens' Defence Corp threw out his scheme for recruiting with 'derision and scorn'; it was 'a dodge to save the face of the anti-conscriptionists', the CDC believed and McCombs loyalty was sufficently evident from 'his public utterances and his message to Australia against the referendum ....'[126] In the City Council conservatives called for his resignation.[127] By the end of 1916, the whole of the Christchurch labour leadership was on the defensive. Dan Sullivan and the others tried in vain to reply to attacks upon their loyalty.[128]

During that year New Zealand labour had been presented with some fearful examples of the way conscription could wreck a political party. The Australian Labor Party tore itself apart in public over the issue. Sullivan in his newspaper column, tried to keep the Australian debate before the Christchurch public in an unbiassed way,[129] giving speeches from both sides but at the same time emphasing the integrity of the anti-conscription argument. The Australians, he wrote, like the New Zealanders, wanted to see the war effort through to a victorious conclusion. But also like the New Zealand labour movement Australian labour recognised that the civil rights and liberties needed to be safeguarded. Conscription was incompatible with this.[130]

Christchurch labour leaders were horrified at the political suicide

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125. LT 27 Jul 1916, p.7, c.1
126. Ibid., 9 Nov 1916, p.4, c.5
127. CCC Minutes 4 Dec 1916
128. Eg. LT 21 Nov 1916, p.8, c.3-5
129. Eg. S 14 Nov 1916, p.14, c.1-3; Ibid., 18 Nov 1916, p.12, c.1-4 for results of voting.
130. Eg. Ibid., 30 Sep 1916, p.12, c.1-2; Ibid., 31 Oct 1916, p.3, c.1-3; Ibid., 7 Nov 1916 p.4, c.3-4

committed by the Australian Labor Party and fearful that a similar thing could occur within their own movement. Already, by the beginning of 1916, some of their number had declared for conscription. At the same time John Payne was busy with disaffected Liberals, in their 'half-formed intention' to form a 'Labour Party'. Local labour leaders had had more than enough experience of the way in which faction fighting could destroy progress and organisation. The dramatic lessons of the Australian example heightened their alarm. It was no time to allow the formation of a rival party to play upon the already existing divisions about conscription. Christchurch labour leaders became more than ever determined to secure a change of name from 'Social Democratic Party' to 'Labour Party' in 1916 as one of the measures best calculated to ensure the continued unity of their political organisation.[131]

However, if by the middle of the war, labour's resistance to conscription was beginning to drive out some of its supporters, at the same time the stand was attracting others. The anti-militarists and the labour movement were drawn together because the community as a whole was polarising. As labour's resistance to conscription became firmer, attacks upon it by conservatives became more savage. The goodwill which had led even the pro-Reform Press to describe Dan Sullivan in 1914 as an 'earnest young man with good qualities, which we would be sorry to see extinguished by a Parliamentary career'[132] had evaporated by the early months of 1917. He was then the member of a dangerous and lunatic political group whose aim was 'to weaken the will of our people to fight' and whose policy was inspired, if not 'directly engineered and instigated by German emissaries or sympathisers ....'[133]

The Government began to move with a heavy hand against the labour

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131. See Chapter II, p.61-5 for these events.
132. P 22 Oct 1914, p.6, c.2
133. Ibid., 26 Mar 1917, T.L.C. Scrapbook

movement. In September 1916, the SDP issued a manifesto urging peace; a few weeks later, over 10,000 copies were distributed to homes in the city. George Russell, as Minister of Internal Affairs, was quick to issue threats.[134] The Fabian Society had co-operated with the militant socialists within the labour movement in the distribution of the circular,[135] but the socialists were at the same time busy with their own initiative. Fred Cooke and a small band of associates organised the campaign and set the example. Cooke was firmly opposed to the existence of a standing army in capitalist states believing that only under socialist order should they be allowed to exist. He stuck to these beliefs after the war, when the rest of the Labour Party moved away from anti-militarism,[136] but in 1916 he was able to mobilise considerable support within the local labour movement. After the UFL conference, he helped launch a branch of the Conscription-Repeal League. League leaders campaigned on street corners, urging young men opposed to conscription to sign a pledge committing themselves to personal opposition 'whatever the penalties'.[137] This was all rather too radical for some of the established anti-militarists. Charles Mackie and the National Peace Council refused to join their campaign.[138] The Conscription-Repeal League also organised a special meeting for all men drawn in the first ballot; about 100 attended and listened attentively to the explanation of their rights while 300 heckled from outside the hall.[139]

This initiative of the militant socialists was soon suppressed.

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134. LT 18 Nov 1916, p.7, c.3
135. T.L.C. Minutes 28 Oct 1916
136. Eg. MW 13 Aug 1919, p.3, c.3, NZLP Fourth Annual Conference
137. LT 6 Jun 1916, p.8, c.2; Ibid., 13 Jun 1916, p.8, c.4
138. H. Noreton - C.R.N. Mackie 31 Jan 1917; C.R.N. Mackie - H. Noreton 14 Feb 1917, Mackie Papers No. 609
139. LT 8 Dec 1916, p.8, c.5

In December 1916 the government gazetted sedition regulations and within a short space of time all the leaders of the militant wing were picked off and gaoled. Fred Cooke was arrested only a few days before Christmas. He was given 12 months hard labour.[140] Tim Armstrong was arrested soon after. Armstrong had settled in Christchurch not long before. He was then working as a watersider and made sure of his arrest in advance by advertising the time, place and subject of his address.[141]

In early 1917 two leaders of the pre-war Passive Resisters' Union were imprisoned. Reg Williams was given 12 months hard labour for poking fun at 'his friends in the Admiralty ... von Turpentine and Admiral Jellyfish' and condemning the 'howling flag-waggers'.[142] Peter Scott Ramsay was given 11 months; less than the maximum in order to ensure again his eligibility for the ballot upon release from gaol. Ramsay had been in the anti-militarist movement since boyhood and from the first days of war he was victimised by employers for his pronouncements against conscription. When he was drawn in the first ballot, Ramsay decided that he was 'knocking on the door of gaol anyway and determined to at least go out with a flash.' He addressed a big open air meeting declaring 'To Hell with the Conscription Act'.[143]

These leaders were colourful and exuberant characters. Their speeches raised as much laughter as passion; but the business in hand was serious. The spectacle of such a series of prompt arrests and harsh sentances alarmed and filled with fear many within the labour movement. John McCullough wrote unhappily in his diary of his son, Roy, a 'wanderer on the face of the earth a fugitive from the iniquitous law that would compel him to kill a fellow human being or be killed ...' McCullough

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140. LT 20 Dec 1916, p.10, c.3; Ibid., 19 Dec 1916, p.6, c.8

141. Bernard Kendrick 'Hubert Thomas Armstrong: Miner, Unionist, Politician' Unpublished M.A. Thesis, Auckland University College, 1950, p.56

142. MW 31 Jan 1917, p.4, c.6-7; LT 22 Jan 1917, p.6, c.8

143. MW 7 Feb 1917, p.5, c.5; LT 30 Jan 1917, p.9, c.3

also had fears for himself. He hesitated expressing his views fully, even in the pages of his diary, because 'they are & have been so seditious. I will try & continue to record passing events ... & try to modify my language so that if it were confiscated I might not be hung.'[144]

In such an atmosphere, the build-up of a crisis atmosphere, like-minded people looked to each other for support. Fear drove the anti-militarists and the labour movement together. As the militants within the labour movement were removed by imprisonment, the burden for motivating labour fell squarely on the established pre-war anti-militarist groups. Their task was made easire by a revival of morale in the ranks of labour at the time. It was inspired by a number of events, perhaps the most important being the example of the Australian debate over conscription. If the spectacle of the split and destruction of the Australian Labor Government was dismaying, the results of the Australian conscription plebiscites were heartening. As a way out of its difficulties the federal Labor government had looked to a popular mandate from the people to endorse conscription. When in 1916 a majority was given against conscription, the Prime Minister, the irrepressible Billy Hughes, determined to stage another referendum in order to secure the desired result. After an increasingly bitter and controversial campaign, the result was again given against conscription in 1917. Australian anti-militarists were elated. They interpreted the result as the inevitable and righteous triumph of justice and democracy over tyranny and militarism.[145]

The Christchurch labour movement had a number of direct links with the Australian 'No' campaign. James McCombs had signed the telegram of support. Bob Semple had been sent by the New Zealand labour movement to Australia to take part in the campaign; on his return, victorious and

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144. Diary Vol VI 17 Feb 1918, J.A. McCullough Papers
145. See L.C. Jauncey, op.cit., Foreword by P.J. O'Farrell, p.vi-vii.

elated, Semple declared that the Australians were 'waiting for something to be done' in New Zealand.[146] Adela Pankhurst, one of Australia's leading anti-militarist campaigners toured New Zealand in 1916. Adela Pankhurst was one of the daughters of Emily Pankhurst, the famous English suffragette. Adela Pankhurst had gone to Australia from Britain some years before the out break of the war and had become one of the country's leading feminists and anti-militarists. After the first conscription referendum, she came to New Zealand in a speaking tour; in Christchurch she stayed with James and Elizabeth McCombs[147] and worked closely with the leading women anti-militarist campaigners, Sarah Page and Ada Wells. The Canterbury Women's Institute had worked hard to prepare the way for Adela Pankhurst's visit.[148] Ada Wells had been campaigning against conscription for several months, taking a prominent part with Ted Howard and Fred Cooke.[149]

Adela Pankhurst attracted the crowds; hundreds of people were turned away from some meetings and 'over-flow' addresses were given afterwards to those who had been unable to get inside. Special public meetings attended only by women, were organised.[150] The local papers preserved an icy indifference towards her visit; the Lyttelton Times broke the silence only to declare her arguments a 'futile agitation'.[150a] She herself declared her trip had been 'wonderfully successful' and that its most 'remarkable feature ... has been the part taken by women, many of whom have never entered into public life before ....'[151] In the wake of Adela Pankhurst's visit, the anti-militarist women of Christchurch

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146. LT 13 Dec 1916, p.5, c.2
147. Interview Stella Joyce, 29 Nov 1978
148. MW 19 Jul 1916, p.5, c.3
149. Eg. LT 28 May 1916, p.3, c.4
150. Eg. MW 21 Jun 1916, p.4, c.5
150a. LT 12 Jun 1916, p.6, c.2
151. Ibid., p.6, c.3

stepped up their campaign and expanded their organisation. A branch of the Women's International League had earlier been formed in the city.[152] Its aim was to develop 'the ideals of modern democracy in the interests of constructive Peace' and 'secure the emancipation of women and the protection of their interest'.[153] The Christchurch branch of the WIL, bent all its energies to securing the repeal of conscription in 1916 and 1917. Through the unions the WIL began a campaign to unite all women against the Conscription Act: men were urged to pass on the messages to the womenfolk of their families, and to themselves attend the weekly public rallies staged by the WIL to protect the women from molestation.[154] Most unions lent a sympathetic ear, although a few burst out into noisy argument at the initiative of the women. The furniture workers became so unruly, that the WIL deputation had to be terminated abruptly, 'the President having to call members to order by asking them to confine themselves to questions which the ladies were quite willing to answer.'[155]

The New Zealand labour movement took careful note of the events in Australia during 1916. In his bi-weekly newspaper column, Dan Sullivan offered a commentary and gave breakdowns and explanations of the results.[156] He had been convinced even before the war of the strength of the resistance in Christchurch to compulsory military training.[157] The Australian results reinforced the belief. By the end of 1916, conservatives in Christchurch were worried about the effect of the Australian example on New Zealanders. The Mayor, Henry Holland, declared that 'when conscription

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152. MW 19 Jul 1916, p.5, c.3-4

153. LT 15 Mar 1916, p.3, c.6; MW 3 Aug 1916, p.3, c.3

154. Eg. Christchurch Tramway Workers' Union Minutes, 30 Aug 1916. WIL met each Thursday in the Socialist Hall.

155. Christchurch Furniture Workers' Union Minutes 6 Dec 1916

156. Eg. S 14 Nov 1915, p.12, c.1-2

157. See above, p. 86-7

was defeated ... he and other citizens realised that something should be done to counteract any bad effects ....'[158] But it was not easy to puncture the confidence of the anti-militarists, inflating under the influence of such an example.

By March 1917, when the TLC took the initiative in calling together a Municipal Labour Representation Committee to plan and fight the local body elections, the anti-militarists were in a militant mood. The inaugural meeting of the LRC was a unique occasion. The TLC had issued invitations to all 'Progressive bodies' in the community. The National Peace Council, the Fabian Society, Canterbury Women's Institute, Women's International League, the Socialist Party and the unions all sent delegates.[159] Labour's own leading anti-militarists, like Fred Cooke and Tim Armstrong, had been removed from the scene by imprisonment, but the anti-militarists from outside were present in force and able to directly influence the formation of LRC policy and type of fighting platform adopted.

They secured the adoption of a bold platform. Against all tradition, the LRC decided to fight the elections on national rather than local issues, and on principle rather than a pragmatic point by point programme of municipal action. Dan Sullivan thought this move to make the focus of the campaign questions of a 'national character ... courageous' and designed to 'give the tip'[160] to the government. Over 56 organisations[161] were present when it was decided to use the elections to 'preserve the rights and freedom of a free people against internal and foreign agression' by making the issue the repeal of conscription and the confiscation of all war profits to be used to bring the wages of servicemen

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158. LT 13 Nov 1916, p.9, c.5

159. Ted Howard in S Labour column, T.L.C. Scrapbook; S 22 May 1917 p.3, c.1

160. S 24 Feb 1917, p.12, c.1

161. Ibid., 22 May 1917, p.3, c.1

up to at least the level of the best-paid artisan.[162]

Anti-militarists not only got this programme adopted, they came forward as LRC candidates to defend it. Ada Wells and Henry Worrall both stood. Sarah Page intended to stand but withdrew at the last moment. These anti-militarists based their campaigns solely on conscription. They explicitly declined to even discuss local issues, which were considered less important, mere distractions to the business in hand. Henry Worrall 'would not touch on local politics, because ... an expression of opinion on national matters would do more good for the workers than anything else.'[163]

Left to their own devices, it is very unlikely that the leaders of the labour movement would have given conscription such a pre-eminent place in an election campaign. They loyally defended it in public, but had reservations about it in private. Some of the most experienced of labour's local leaders were not present when the policy was adopted. James McCombs had earlier decided to retire[164] from local body politics, and did not attend the meetings which convened the LRC. He was later persuaded to stand for mayor only under popular pressure from the rest of the labour movement.[165] Others, like Ted Howard thought that the programme had justice perhaps, if not political acumen on its side: 'At the time the LRC programme was adopted', he later declared, ' a few of us doubted the wisdom of making an anti-conscription platform. We offered no objections but we did not think it wise.'[166] Howard was prepared to accept the will of the majority. He had already made a name for himself as an opponent of conscription and if nothing else, he admired

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162. Ted Howard in S labour column, T.L.C. Scrapbook
163. LT 19 Apr 1917, p.6, c.3
164. S 24 Feb 1917, p.12, c.1
165. T.L.C. Minutes 3 Mar 1917
166. Ted Howard in S labour column, T.L.C. Scrapbook

the courage of the LRC in sticking to its convictions.

> Now I know it was the right course. It would have been cowardly to have adopted any other course. Christchurch had had the anti-militarist movement for years, and if it had deserted its principles at the last moment for the sake of winning seats, then it would have deserved to have gone down[167]

He stood as one of the LRC candidates.

Others, however, believed that labour had unwisely allowed its judgement to be over-ruled. John McCullough wrote of his dilemma:

> Have read up the fight being waged by our people for the local bodies Election [sic] & [sic] have been asked to write something in simpathy [sic] with them: I have not yet made up my mind .... They have made the Repeal [sic] of the Military Service Act the first plank ... I'm not quite sure whether I approve of this. I certainly approve of anything they may do so as to make our displeasure, & hatred of conscription [sic], but can't make up my mind that a municipal Election [sic] is the right place. I'm inclined to think I will have to say something.[168]

But he did not. Nor did he stand as candidate. McCullough doubted his own strength. 'Can it be that I have become afraid to express my Pacifist views', he wondered, ' - I feel they are unpopular & [sic] that I am in a hopeless & helpless minority.'[169]

Not many anti-militarists within the labour movement allowed their misgivings to paralyse them in such a way. Generally, the cautious were submerged in the wave of enthusiasm generated by the convinced. Those who did believe believed with an almost religious devotion. Campaign meetings

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167. Ted Howard in S labour column, T.L.C. Scrapbook
168. Diary Vol VI, 15 Apr 1917, J.A. McCullough Papers
169. Ibid., 25 Apr 1917

were packed out, the crowds were wildly, almost fanatically enthusiastic. Collections were large[170] and morale was high. Labour's candidates became persuaded that they were in fact riding the crest of a wave of popular unrest against the government and that it would carry them to unprecedented heights of political success. Dan Sullivan prophecied a 'sensational'[171] result for the LRC. Their morale was also boosted by the fact that the elections were held under a system of proportional representation, a move labour had always advocated as the most democratic of electroal systems. Labour therefore expected to be aided by the direct and unperverted vote of the people. James McCombs announced that the LRC anticipated securing the vote of wage earners throughout the city, about three quarters of the total Christchurch population.[172]

Labour was wholly undetered by the campaign of hatred and vilification that was mounted against them by Christchurch daily papers. All possible kinds of abuse was poured upon them and they were accused of being everything from disloyal to deranged.[173] The example of the Australian no conscription campaigns had filled Christchurch labour with the confidence that justice was more important than publicity. Dan Sullivan pointed out that all Australian papers but one had urged conscription in the referenda, yet the vote was a 'No' majority. 'I am of the opinion' he concluded, 'that ... newspaper editorials won't [sic] matter'.[174]

The results therefore came as a stunning blow. Labour was defeated. McCombs came last in the race for the mayoralty by a large margin, and several sitting labour city councillors lost their seats. On all sides

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170. Eg. LT 23 Apr 1917, p.9, c.1; MW 9 May 1917, p.7, c.6
171. LT 16 Apr 1917, p.6, c.8
172. Ibid., 21 Apr 1917, p.8, c.2
173. S T.L.C. press cutting. n.d. circa Apr 1917
174. Ibid.

this was seen as a rejection of labour policy. The newspapers crowed their delight. The result was a 'huge and abiding credit' to the city declared the Lyttelton Times.[175] Labour lamented: 'The conservatives of Christchurch won out ...', Ted Howard wrote bitterly. 'Two-thirds and more than two-thirds voted in favour of the Government; in favour of conscription; in favour of cheap soldiers and in favour of the war ...'[176]

In fact, the reasons for the result were more complex. Resistance to conscription was, indeed, not as great or solid as some labour leaders had come to believe. In some unions for instance, anti-conscription resolutions were debated only by a small minority of members and passed only by a narrow margin.[177] But in April 1917, other influences besides conscription were at work in deciding voters' choices, and some of the anti-militarist candidates put up by the LRC did very poorly, others were successful. Ada Wells, whose campaign had been nothing if not exuberant and pacifist, she was 'out for the cause of peace', she declared. 'She had been termed unpatriotic, and if to believe in the brotherhood of man was unpatriotic - well, then, she was unpatriotic.'[178] Yet she became the first woman elected to a city council in New Zealand. Ted Howard, who had opposed conscription from the start and organised the appeal for men gaoled under the war regulations was also elected. Proportional representation had favoured the well-known. Ada Wells had been a leading feminist in Christchurch since at least 1893 when she became the first secretary of the National Council of Women. Ted Howard had made his mark as leader of the Socialist Party before the war. In contrast, Henry Worrall, who came bottom of the poll, was known only in union circles. Henry Herbert had been elected first under the ward

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175. LT 1 May 1917, p.8, c.2

176. MW 9 May 1917, p.7, c.6

177. Eg. Grocers' Union. 19 attended a meeting, 5 did not want a delegate to the UFL anti-conscription conference. A special meeting later over-turned the decision of the regular meeting. LT 20 Jan 1916, p.5, c.2-3

178. Ibid., 17 Apr 1917, p.6, c.2

system in 1915. He was popular in Linwood and his vote there remained high in 1917 but could not offset the tiny impact he made in booths elsewhere in the city.[179]

But the important fact was that the leaders of the political labour movement interpreted the stand as a mistake. They determined to do two things: drop outright resistance to conscription and get rid of the anti-militarists. Never again should outside groups have a chance to force labour policy. Dan Sullivan argued that 'fad organisations' should in future be kept out and that only party branches and the unions have a say. 'A Labour Party should be a Labour Party', he declared, '... not a conglomeration of every fad organisation in the community. These external organisations ... have no right to control the policy of Labour or select its candidates'.[180] In fact, there was no such purge. The anti-militarist groups like the National Peace Council remained within the Labour Party. Its war-time record against conscription and the personal roles of some of the leaders, serving prison sentences themselves, or assisting the families of those who were imprisoned, committed anti-militarists to the party for years.

But it was a commitment that posed continuing problems. In 1918 the affiliation of the Municipal Labour Representation Committee to the Labour Party was one. Anti-militarists had been able to exercise a larger degree of influence within a purely local labour body that would be possible in a national organisation. In 1917 it had been a comparatively easy matter for the NPC to thwart a move to throw out the anti-conscription fighting platform.[181] It would be much more difficult to exercise such influence at Labour Party Conferences and to contend against influence of labour from centres without a tradition of anti-militarism. At the

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179. LT 26 Apr 1917, p.8, c.3-6. Table of voting, booth by booth.
180. S 9 Feb 1918, p.7, c.1
181. NPC - LRC 30 Mar 1917, Mackie Papers No. 592

same time, the NPC and other anti-militarist groups knew that the Labour party had much bigger voice in the political arena than they could ever hope for. Anti-militarists decided they could not afford to work outside the Labour Party. The NPC affiliated, and 'immediately set to work to alter the constitution of the party to meet its wishes.'[182]

The National Peace Council appointed Norman Bell its delegate to the Christchurch LRC.[183] Bell was an intellectual, a graduate of St. Andrews University.[184] He was nominated as a Labour candidate in 1919,[185] but was disqualified from standing since he had been a conscientious objector during the war and was in consequence deprived of his civil rights. Nevertheless, Bell continued to work within the Christchurch Labour Party. The NPC sent him to the 1919 Labour Party Conference where he was instrumental in getting the party to throw out its platform for a citizen army at union rates of pay and to adopt instead an internationalist stance.[186] Bell had wanted a more radical declaration than that decided upon by the conference. Most, even the militant socialists, did not want to go the full distance with the Christchurch anti-militarists. Peter Fraser made the distinction between socialism and 'mere pacificism.'[187] However since Labour was 'the only party which had definitely declared itself against militarism', anti-militarists in Christchurch threw themselves into Labour's 1919 campaign. The elections had become the 'supreme' question for groups like the NPC.[188] From within the LRC anti-militarists pushed for action against the government's intention to

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182. NPC Annual Report, Mackie Papers, No. 41
183. NPC - LRC 30 May 1919, Ibid., No. 592
184. N.M. Bell Education For Freedom, NZLP. n.d. circa 1921, front page.
185. NPC - LRC, 30 May 1919, Mackie Papers, No. 592
186. NPC Annual Report, 1920, Ibid., No. 41
187. W.D. McIntyre et al., op.cit., p.355
188. NPC Annual Report, 1920, Mackie Papers, No. 41

expand schemes of compulsory military training and the NPC supplied local Labour candidates with many 'valuable suggestions' for their arguments against the international settlement that was decided upon by the Versailles Peace Conference.[189]

Nevertheless, the seeds of division were there. Pacifists and anti-militarists turned more and more to independent activity during the 1920s; during the Second World War Norman Bell stood as a Parliamentary candidate in opposition to the war-time labour government headed by Peter Fraser, which had itself introduced conscription. Even before the end of the First World War, some anti-militarists had sensed a parting of the ways with Labour. Reg Williams who had been with the SDP since its first beginnings had great misgivings about Labour by 1919. During his time in prison as a conscientious objector, Williams' concern for world peace had grown. Upon his release he devoted his life to pacifist work. He had a scheme for touring the country on a permanent propaganda mission. With a gypsy caravan 14 foot by 7 foot, drawn by two horses, fully fitted out as a bookstore and with a collapsible side to act as a public stage, Williams wanted to traverse the length and breadth of New Zealand, accompanied only by a small band of devoted followers. Some individuals within the Christchurch labour movement were impressed - for instance Henry Worrall gave his backing but Williams did not want to be a Labour 'mouthpiece'. The contradictions within the Party were already too obvious: 'Now though I loyally support Labour Party [sic] and the ideals it represents', he wrote to Charles Mackie, there were times

> that my being directly representative ... would prove very embarrassing. For instance it would be difficult to explain why one Labour MP is wasting his time crying out for war memorials or another asking for a "Navy" as New Zealand's first line of "defence". [190]

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189. NPC Annual Report, 1920, Mackie Papers, No. 41

190. Reg Williams - C.R.N. Mackie 6 Sep 1920, Mackie Papers, No. 229

The success of the anti-militarists in securing the adoption of the conscription repeal plank in 1917, paradoxically ensured the decline of their influence and the decline of conscription as an issue for labour. In the immediate wake of the elections, there was much heartsearching and some public squabbling among the leaders,[191] about the worth of conscription as a rallying cry for labour. After 1917 the labour movement in Christchurch concentrated upon aspects of its policies that united followers and gained support in the wider community.

During 1918, the fighting resolve of the unions was stiffened by the threat of industrial conscription. Since the beginning of the war, newspapers had been speaking about the need for conscription of men and some had seen military conscription as a first step on the path. Farmers hard hit by labour shortages at harvest times[192] began to call for the direction of manpower. Labour viewed these omens with alarm. Then, in the 1918 Finance Bill, the government introduced legislation to allow for industrial conscription.[193] James McCombs fought the measure in Parliament and alerted the unions.[194] From all quarters of the labour movement, condemnations poured forth and in July the United Federation of Labour and the transport workers called an open conference against industrial conscription. The threat was averted by the signing of the Armistice in November 1918, but the whole debate had served to reunite the labour movement. The ruthless and determined intention of the government had been very clear. Labour's suspicions of both Reform and Liberal were reinforced and fixed. Direction of manpower struck at the roots of labour organisation and in the face of such challenge both wings presented a united front. Ted Howard was struck with the 'distinct

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191. S T.L.C. Scrapbook. n.d. circa 1917; S 9 May 1917, p.12, c.1

192. Eg. LT 15 Jul 1915, p.6, c.1-2

193. P.D. Vol. 182, 9-12 Apr 1918, p.217-39

194. Eg. Lyttelton Waterside Workers' Union Minutes 15 Apr 1918; T.L.C. Minutes 27 Apr 1918; Ibid., 11 May 1918; LT 14 May 1918, p.3, c.5

revival in the ranks of Labor [sic] in the Holy City ....'[195]

Political labour in Christchurch abandoned the policy of resistance to conscription after the 1917 local body elections, but not the victims of conscription. From the time the Military Service Bill had been introduced, labour had led the call for the recognition of conscientious objectors. Others in the community had also protested against the New Zealand law, which was harsher in this respect than that of any other country in the British Empire. The Christchurch Presbytery was one group of clergy who regarded the provisions on conscientious objection as against all traditions of British freedom.[196] Labour kept the plight of conscientious objectors before the public eye. Ted Howard was organiser of a fund for conscientious objectors and their families.[197] Fred Cooke published a magazine, Punchi which gave detailed coverage of the cases, imprisonments and sufferings of the young men who refused to fight. Continual comparisons were drawn with the cultured and enjoyable life that the wealthy elite of the country were able to secure for themselves at the time. In complementary columns, their social whirl of concerts, 'at homes', sports and leisure was contrasted with the grind of the lives of workers and the privations of conscientious objectors.[198] Ted Howard and Cooke took up cases of obvious injustices. Much was made of the incident involving the Price family. William Price was a 'hard-working bootmaker', and his wife Ella was a 'native of Christchurch' whose 'antecedents were excellent'. Their son who was serving in the army returned on leave and hid himself in his parents' home when it expired. The authorities raided the house, the son was discovered and arrested.

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195. MW 8 May 1918, p.5, c.6

196. Outlook 13 Jul 1916, p.7, c.3, p.8, c.1-3

197. Eg. MW 27 Feb 1918, p.5, c.1-2; Seditious Prisoners' and Conscientious Objectors' Fund. n.d. circa 1919, Hocken Library.

198. Eg. Punchi 1 Feb 1918, p.4, c.3; and passim.

The father and mother were also arrested, Ella Price still with her youngest daughter a babe in her arms. The case aroused considerable popular protest. It was widely felt that Ella Price had only followed her maternal instincts in harbouring her son and that the six months gaol term meted out was excessively harsh.[199]

By concentrating upon such inhumanities, and others like the shipping of conscientious objectors to the front line, the labour movement may have gained some sympathy in the community.[200] But the issue remained a dangerous one. Some of those who had at first worked hard to liberalise the provisions for conscientious objection in the New Zealand Military Service Act were later alienated. Leonard Isitt, the MP for Christchurch North had argued against the Military Service Bill in Parliament. A few months later, however, he wrote to Charles Mackie about Henry Reynolds, secretary of the Anti-militarist League, who was gaoled as a military defaulter although he was over age for military service. Isitt declared 'You could not mention a name less likely to arouse my sympathy .... The man himself told me that German governance is no worse than British .... I immediately washed my hands of him.'[201] It was easy for many of the general public to implicate the whole of the labour movement in such 'disloyalty'.

However, if the Labour Party gained little at the time by its support of men who would not fight, it won considerable popular acclaim for its work to improve the conditions of those at the front. By 1918, war weariness was beginning to be felt in the community. If most were not

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199. Interview, Mrs. Tovey 21 Dec 1978, press cuttings in her possession.

200. Eg. J.J. North and Ministers' Association wanted the Government to appoint a Board of Enquiry, LT 14 Feb 1918, p.8, c.4. The Methodist Synod made a similar call, MW 5 Dec 1917, p.7, c.3, as did the Presbytery, LT 3 Mar 1918, p.7, c.2

201. L.M. Isitt - C.R.N. Mackie, 10 Sep 1917, Mackie Papers, No. 55

opposed to the war itself, a growing number were disenchanted with the government's way of organising the war effort. The decision to conscript married men was widely condemned. The rates of pay for servicemen and the provisions made for their dependents were already considered by many to be inadequate. With the call-up of married men, many women with families would be left in an impossible position of economic privation. A great number of them were consequently disturbed and angry.

At a public meeting called to discuss the matter, public discontent surfaced. James McCombs set the tone for labour. 'How were the soldier's dependents being cared for as "wards of the state?"' he asked the crowd. 'They were receiving less than the Magistrate's Court awarded for the maintenance of an illegitimate child.'[202] The answering applause was thunderous. When Mayor Henry Holland who was chairman, rose to put a prepared resolution calling in restrained terms for the government to improve conditions, Ernest Langley stood in the body of the hall to argue that the demand was not sufficently stringent. John Flood and Hiram Hunter then put a counter resolution, demanding that the Cabinet should give a firm agreement to improve pay and pensions before one married man reported for camp. There was wild enthusiasm, the motion was endorsed with only four dissidents and the meeting broke up amidst jubilation.[203]

Two days later, married men were required to report to the King Edward Barracks for transport to camp. A huge crowd gathered expectantly outside the compound. Inside 500 men and women milled around the roped-off section into which men were to step as their names were called. At the beginning of the roll-call, disorder broke out: the crowd went on the rampage; there was a great din, the ropes were smashed down, the military authorities were jeered and Henry Holland was followed by

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202. LT 29 Apr 1918, p.4, c.7

203. Ibid., p.4, c.7-8, p.5, c.1

women and youths 'hooting and shouting offensive remarks'.[204] The crowd outside was even larger and more angry. Women tried to storm the barrack gates, kicking at policemen who snatched at them from below. Several policemen were pushed into a ditch when they tried to make arrests. The mob was cheered on by yet more people who had positioned themselves in nearby elevated spots so as to better view the fracas.

Hours later, a very small contingent of men emerged from the barracks under heavy guard to march to the railway station for transportation to camp. The entire route was lined with wholly silent onlookers. There was 'an almost entire absence of enthusiasm'; the crowd was expectantly waiting for more.[205]

Women had been in the forefront of the whole agitation, and the day after the riot 'the formidable Mrs. Martin'[206] a leading figure in the Woolston SDP, called a public meeting of women to discuss further action. The women decided to organise a national organisation and intended to use it to secure a general election; only candidates who supported their demands for the better provision for soldiers and their families should be endorsed by this new organisation.[207]

The affair caused a great deal of excitement in Christchurch which the government only exacerbated by its heavy-handed and ill-considered response. The Cabinet decided to prosecute the Labour leaders John Flood, Ernest Langley and Hiram Hunter, for sedition. The men were tried and given prison sentences. Hiram Hunter lost his seat on the City Council as a consequence. This was widely thought unjust. The Labour Party organised a petition calling for clemency. It met with a ready response,

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204. LT 29 Apr 1918, p.5, c.2-3
205. Ibid., 30 Apr 1918, p.5, c.2-3
206. P.S. O'Connor, 'Barmy Christchurch - A Melodrama in three parts' Comment 1968, 35. p.24
207. LT 1 May 1918, p.7, c.1-2

hundreds of people signed the petition the day that it opened in the Square and James McCombs promptly presented it to the Attorney General.[208] In Wellington, Jim Roberts and the Transport Workers Advisory Board took up the question,[209] Flood and Langley were both officials of a constituent union. Labour figures in Christchurch agitated both from within the unions and in the City Council - where even the Mayor agreed with their call for the men to be released.[210]

The Government had played right into the hands of the Labour Party in reacting this way; it manufactured martyrs and gave Labour excellent publicity. The Party shared in the widespread sympathy accorded to the imprisoned men themselves and attention was drawn to the justice of the Labour Party's demands. In victimising Labour for working to further the interests of soldiers, the Government had given the Party excellent publicity. Labour was put into an irrefutably loyalist position by the very people who had been loudest in their accusations of disloyalty. This went a long way towards finally cleansing Labour of any anti-war taint remaining from the campaigns of 1917; it also made eminently plausible the party's claims that its war-time record was one of real integrity, not mindless jingoism.

All the Labour candidates in Christchurch during the 1919 election campaigns defended the positions they had taken up during the war, but some were able to make more political capital out of it than others. Ted Howard's past was free of 'discreditable words and acts'.[211] James McCombs went over again Labour's arguments against conscription - that it had been unnecessary and could have been avoided if the Government had been prepared to treat the soldiers with liberality.[212] He was able

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208. LT 13 May 1918, p.4, c.7
209. Ibid.
210. CCC Minutes 20 May 1918
211. LT 16 Dec 1919, p.12, c.2
212. Ibid., 18 Nov 1919, p.8, c.1

to reinforce his case by pointing out that the Returned Servicemen's Association had endorsed Labour's demand that pensions for soldiers should equal the wages of the best-paid artisan.[213] McCombs believed that Labour won the allegiance of servicemen; in his victory speech he claimed that the soldiers' vote had gone largely to him, since the men preferred Labour's deeds to the Governments words.[214]

Ironically, Hiram Hunter, the Labour candidate in Christchurch who suffered most for his work on behalf of servicemen, was able to capitalise least on the issue. He faced a very wily opponent in Henry Thacker. Thacker had the double advantage of being a medical practitioner and of having served a Parliamentary term. He wholly repudiated the Liberal Party, whose war-time record as part of the Government was now a liability, pointing out that he had attended only one caucus of the coalition and telling his constitutuents 'Don't mess him up with the Liberals. Don't bother. Dr. Thacker is that way, that he takes his own course'.[215] At the same time, Thacker was able to appropriate the Labour stance of true concern for the people and the soldiers. He had been a diligent visitor and investigator of military camps and made exposures of substandard conditions for which even the Canterbury Women's Institute had praised him.[216] He was also, like Labour, able to point to attacks from the Government because of his concern for the ordinary people. 'Nothing had pleased him more', he declared than when supporting the

> rights of soldiers and their dependents, Mr. Massey had called him the most objectionable person he had ever met. He did not mind being termed objectionable when he was fighting for the rights of the people. [217]

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213. LT 18 Nov 1919, p.8, c.1
214. Ibid., 18 Dec 1919, p.8, c.2
215. P 20 Nov 1919, p.8, c.5
216. Eg. LT 12 Jul 1915, p.10, c.6
217. P 20 Nov 1919, p.8, c.5

Thacker was thus able to outdo Labour at its own game and avoid the odium that Hiram Hunter heaped upon the Liberal Party. Hunter was outmanouvred in Christchurch East.

However, in Avon, Dan Sullivan was perfectly placed to do battle on the question. His opponent George Russell, had been Minister in charge of Health and Internal Affairs in the Coalition. As such he bore the brunt of the responsibility for the outbreak of the influenza epidemic in 1918 and was directly implicated in the decision to imprison the Labour men Flood, Langley and Hunter. He decided to try and salvage his political fortune by attacking Labour's record and declaring that he was going to make the campaign turn upon conscription. In fact he was not able to control the direction that the campaign took; he was continually forced to answer for his actions as Minister of Health,[218] but even when he could direct fire at Labour's opposition to conscription Sullivan had a complete rebuttal in the argument that it was an integral part of the Party's policy of support for soldiers. He consciously used this as a strategy against Russell.[219] Throughout his campaign, Sullivan was accompanied by several returned servicemen, whose task it was to refute accusations of disloyalty. One of them proposed the vote of thanks, which the other seconded, eulogising Dan Sullivan's brother who had died at the front - ' one of the gamest men he had ever met' - and declaring that it was evident Sullivan came from a 'loyal and fearless family'.[220] They told audiences that as soldiers they resented charges of disloyalty thrown at Labour, Sullivan had indeed been their friend. Harry Herbert, one of Sullivan's close associates in Linwood, elected as a City Councillor from the Linwood Ward in 1915 and 1919, declared that as

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218. Eg. LT 21 Nov 1919, p.7, c.6-7

219. Eg. using soldiers' speeches as part of his publicity campaign. Ibid., 17 Dec 1919, p.8, c.2

220. Eg. LT 17 Dec 1919, p.8, c.2-3

a man who had lost his only son at the front, he was in a good position to judgy true patriotism. Herbert declared that Sullivan could in no way be termed 'disloyalist'.[221] During the very last rally of the Labour campaign, a letter was read from the secretary of the Christchurch Branch of the Returned Servicemen's Association, endorsing Sullivan, wishing him success and defending his record of work for soldiers.[222] The election result was a great personal victory. Sullivan recorded a greater number of votes than any other Labour candidate in the country. Part of his success was due to the support of servicemen. Sullivan told the excited and jubilant crowd that gathered to congratulate him that 'he must pay tribute' to the returned soldiers, who 'had stood by him so loyally in the battle'.[223]

By 1919, resistance to conscription had done Christchurch Labour no harm; indeed because of the context in which it was argued, it had done positive good. It was the kind of issue that different groups could support for their own reasons. Pacifists and anti-militarists were attracted to Labour because it offered a sympathetic cover for them to work under. The general public however, was attracted by Labour's argument for economic justice. Voluntary recruiting could be made to work if conditions and pay were adequate. Conscription was a cheap, and ultimately unpatriotic recourse. During the months after the signing of the Armistice, in the aftermath of war frenzy, the full impact and integrity of this argument pressed in upon a working class disillusioned and exhausted by the war effot. By the end of 1919, many workers saw Labour as the most loyal of parties.

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221. LT 17 Dec 1919, p.8, c.2
222. Ibid.
223. Ibid., 18 Dec 1919, p.7, c.8

CHAPTER IV:

LABOUR AND PROHIBITION

The drink traffic had long been a political issue in New Zealand and by the outbreak of war in 1914 the movement for prohibition was in full strength. There was a strong prohibitionist bloc within the Christchurch labour movement, its proponents filled with an evangelical zeal. The passion that the issue aroused made it difficult enough for the labour movement to handle at the best of times, but during the war the whole debate took on an added urgency as prohibition came to be widely urged as a wartime measure. Labour had to rapidly arrive at some resolution of its internal disagreements over the issue. This was a painful business and for a time it seemed likely that the country's political labour movement would be split right down the middle over prohibition. Christchurch was the thin edge of the wedge that threatened to make a chasm of this fault-line in party solidarity.

Prohibition had traditionally been close to the heart of radical politics in the city epitomised in the career and personality of Tommy Taylor. In the late 1880s, Taylor had commenced a political agitation which combined all that was colourful and controversial with the cause of prohibition. Taylor began operations in Sydenham. At the time, the number of hotels in any one district was decided by a Licensing Committee which was elected by the local ratepayers. Taylor determined to use this machinery to close hotels in Sydenham. In 1889, Taylor, then only twenty seven, formed with Leonard Isitt, a Prohibition League which waged a thoroughly organised and spirited campaign for the Licensing Committee elections. A pamphlet printed in the morning could be distributed by evening to all the houses of the suburb once the League put its machinery

into operation. After a series of fevered and at times violent meetings a Licensing Committee was elected in Sydenham which decided to close all eight hotels. Thoroughly alarmed, brewers and publicans appealed to the Supreme Court; the decision was declared invalid.[1]

The Act was thus shown inoperable for securing prohibition, so prohibition forces put pressure on the government to produce some new machinery. The Premier, Richard Seddon, responded by introducing the Alcoholic Liquor Sales Control Act which allowed regular polls on prohibition. But there was a drawback. A three-fifths majority was necessary before any locality could adopt no-license. This Act, which was still in force in 1914 was a standing outrage to prohibitionists who regarded it as a deliberate ploy to thwart abolition of liquor. 'Isn't your vote worth the vote of two bar-maids?' Taylor asked his angry supporters.[2] Throughout the country prohibition advocates worked to secure the abolition of the three-fifths majority in favour of a bare majority. Parliamentry candidates were quizzed on their attitudes and Prohibition Leagues endorsed those who would vote for a change in the law.

In Christchurch by the turn of the century, a solid core of MPs were ardent temperance reformers. Tommy Taylor, elected in 1896, 1902 and 1908, was undoubtedly the city's best known prohibition M.P. until his death in 1911. Leonard Isitt, a Methodist minister who then took over Taylor's seat of Christchurch North, was almost equally as well known for his work as a prohibition agitator. During the pre-war period four other local Liberal MPs were known prohibition advocates. In 1915 Harry Ell, the member for Christchurch South and Isitt were both on the Executive of the local Prohibition Council.[3]

The backbone of rank-and-file support for prohibition came from

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1. Nellie F. Macleod, op.cit., p.17-9
2. Ibid., p.34
3. LT 3 May 1915, p.5, c.4

the non-conformist churches. By the 1890s the Methodists, Presbyterians, Congregationalists and Baptists had all officially endorsed prohibition.[4] Clergy from these Churches provided the leadership of the movement.[5] The Anglicans however, generally, stood back from the agitation. The evils of drink were 'glaringly manifest', they agreed, but the sin of drunkenness was a sin of excess, an abuse of 'God's good things'. The root problem lay in the way alcohol was abused, not in alcohol itself. Furthermore, Anglicans were doubtful about the extent to which prohibition could be implemented even if it did become law. It was at best 'an experiment in the control of human passion, on a vast scale and no one can tell how it may work.'[6] Nevertheless, a number of individual Anglicans became personally convinced; Bishop Julius, the Bishop of Christchurch began his career declaring he was a moderate where drink was concerned and ended it as vice president of the New Zealand Alliance for the Abolition of the Liquor Traffic,[7] the national body which co-ordinated the prohibition campaign. He was active on the local No-License Council as well.[8] The local Roman Catholic clergy were not in favour of prohibition. The one exception, Father Cronin, was known as the 'Prohibition Priest',[9] and his bishop took him to task for taking the stand.[10]

The Social Democratic Party officially had no plank on the liquor question in spite of the strong following for prohibition within the party.

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4. Paul Frederick McKimney, 'The temperance movement in New Zealand, 1835-1894' unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of Auckland, Auckland, 1968, p.156
5. Eg. LT 3 May 1915, p.5, c.4
6. Church News 1 Apr 1919, p.1, c.3, p.2, c.1
7. Nellie F. Macleod, op.cit., p.18
8. Eg. Ibid., 25 Feb 1919, p.6, c.1
9. LT 17 Sep 1917, p.4, c.7
10. Methodist Times 15 Mar 1919, p.1

James McCombs was the best known of labour's prohibition champions. Before becoming involved with labour politics McCombs had worked as an organiser for the Prohibition League in Canterbury, he remained on the Executive of the Prohibition Council during the war[11] and held to his personal convictions about prohibition until his death.

A number of other leading figures in the local SDP were equally convinced of the need for prohibition, notably Dan Sullivan. His association with the Temperance movement was very close by 1914. In Linwood, the area of the city where he built up a power base, prohibition and labour politics were locked together through the activities of a small band of individuals who organised both sets of campaigns. The key figures were Sullivan, Robert Spiers and Annie and Harry Herbert.

All were well-known in SDP politics. Robert Spiers led the local municipal campaign for the party in 1913 and in 1915. His prohibition convictions dated from before the time of his arrival in the city as organiser for the Salvation Army. By 1914 he had drifted from the Army and become a lay preacher in the Methodist Church,[12] but his prohibition ardour had undergone no diminution. The Herberts were well known in Linwood but made little impact on the rest of the city during the war. Harry Herbert was elected to the City Council in 1915 from the Linwood Ward but missed out in 1917 when the elections were held under a city-wide franchise. During the influenza epidemic at the end of the war, the Herberts consolidated their local popularity. They opened their home as a relief depot[13] and engaged a nurse to care for the sick. Annie Herbert accompanied her on rounds of the suburb.[14] In the local body elections a few months later, Harry Herbert was re-elected to the City Council with

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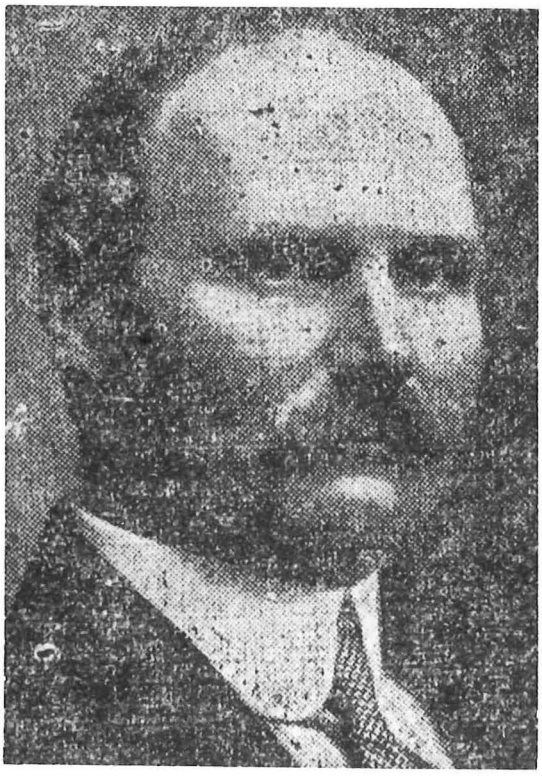
11. Methodist Times, 3 May 1915, p.5, c.4
12. S 6 Mar 1915, p.12, c.1-2
13. LT 18 Nov 1918, p.6, c.2
14. Ibid., 19 Nov 1918, p.5, c.7; Ibid., 20 Nov 1918, p.6, c.2



the biggest vote of any Labour candidate. After the war, Annie Herbert became one of the best loved figures in Christchurch. She was one of the first women in New Zealand to be made a Justice of the Peace.[15]

In 1914, the Herberts, Spiers and Sullivan fought and organised the campaigns for prohibition and the SDP in Avon. Annie Herbert had been a central figure in prohibition campaigns in the area for years. Numerous plans were said to have been masterminded from her front dining room.[16] It was also a headquarters for Sullivan as she acted as secretary for his central election committee.[17] Henry Herbert chaired the opening meeting of the Prohibition League in Avon which was addressed by both Spiers and Sullivan. Sullivan declared that 'nothing could be done while the people voted prohibition and sent back to Parliament men who were prepared to perpetuate the trade ... by maintaining the iniquitous three-fifths majority'.[18] In effect, this was a plea for himself. He stood as the candidate endorsed by the Prohibition League in Avon,[19] since his opponent Henry Russell was one of the few local MPs openly opposed to temperance reform.[20] Sullivan made his commitment to prohibition quite open in 1914. The tone of this campaign was summed up in his final rally cry on polling night: 'for Labour, for temperance and for the Empire.'[21]

Ted Howard's sympathy for prohibition was not as public, but it was at least as longstanding. Since before the turn of the century, in the

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15. Canterbury Women op.cit., p.100. In 1926.
16. J. Cocker and J. Malton Murray, Temperance and Prohibition in New Zealand. Compiled and issued under the auspices of the New Zealand Alliance for the Abolition of the Liquor Traffic, New Zealand Alliance, 1936, p.231
17. LT 15 Oct 1914, p.6, c.8; Ibid., 31 Oct 1914, p.12, c.4
18. Ibid., 8 Oct 1914, p.10, c.4
19. MW 18 Nov 1914, p.8, c.2
20. LT 20 Nov 1914, p.8, c.4-5; and see R.K. Newman, op.cit., p.77
21. Ibid., 10 Dec 1914, p.9, c.3

days when he had been active in the labour movement of South Australia, Howard had been a convinced prohibitionist. He had belonged to the Order of Good Templars, an organisation which he described as 'nearest to perfection of any Temperance Organisation'. He arrived in New Zealand as an accredited agent of the order, a 'Special Travelling Deputy Grand Chief Templar'.[22] Before the war, Howard generally kept his prohibition convictions to himself. Not until 1917, and his renewed involvement in labour politics did the issue again feature prominently in his public utterances.

The political labour movement in Christchurch was overwhelmingly in favour of prohibition throughout the war. On the City Council, the labour representatives continued to press for permission to be granted for the campaigns and demonstrations of the prohibition forces, the churches and particularly the New Zealand Alliance.[23]

The Alliance knew that it had to win over working people if prohibition was to ever become reality. To this end it brought to New Zealand a number of internationally known labour figures as prohibition campaigners. In 1914, Phillip Snowden and his wife arrived. Snowden had been crippled in a cycling accident and afterwards turned to the study of socialism and labour politics. He had grown up in a strongly Wesleyan Methodist and radical atmosphere which had left him a convinced prohibitionist. During the First World War Snowden took a leading role in championing the cause of the conscientious objectors in Britain.[24] In Christchurch in 1914 however, he was famous primarily as a labour MP, in spite of the fact that he was introduced to businessmen as an 'Imperial Personality'.[25]

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22. Howard Papers, M.S. 980/13
23. Eg. CCC Minutes, 21 May 1916; Ibid., 23 Nov 1914
24. Wickham Legg (Ed.) The Dictionary of National Biography 1931-1940 OUP 1915, p.822-5
25. LT 24 Nov 1914, p.10, c.4

The local labour movement eagerly co-operated in Phillip Snowden's prohibition campaign. James McCombs sat on the stage with him at public meetings.[26] Robert Spiers proposed votes of thanks.[27] At a special meeting for Elizabeth Snowden, the leading women of the local labour and radical movements were prominent. Ada Wells and Sarah Page delivered speeches of welcome.[28] Sarah Page's father, Alfred Saunders, had been one of the first and best known of New Zealand's temperance reformers. 'Prohibition Mrs. Page firmly believes in' declared the White Ribbon, New Zealand's prohibition magazine. She did not think it was a panacea for all ills but 'it will at least give the boys and girls a chance'.[29]

Elizabeth McCombs, who was also present at the meeting for Elizabeth Snowden, came like Sarah Page from a strongly prohibitionist background. She had been born in Kaiapoi in 1873, the youngest of seven sisters in a family of nine. Their upbringing was parsimonious, strict and religious. 'Father was Scotch, Mother Irish, and we were brought up on porridge and the Shorter Catechism' she declared later in life.[30] The whole family became involved in the local prohibition movement; It was in the Christchurch Prohibition League that Elizabeth met James McCombs.[31] Her enthusiasm for prohibition led her to join the Women's Christian Temperance Union; she was president of the Christchurch Branch of the WCTU by the outbreak of war[32] and acted as president of the National Conference in 1916.[33] She resigned from the Christchurch Branch

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26. LT 23 Nov 1914, p.8, c.4
27. Ibid., 21 Nov 1914, p.3, c.7
28. Ibid., 23 Nov 1914, p.8, c.4
29. Ann Saunders 'Memorials of Alfred William Robin Page,' Vol. 1. In possession of Mrs. Robin Page. Quoted from the White Ribbon, 15 Jun 1903.
30. Isabel Langford, op.cit., p.15
31. Ibid., p.18
32. LT 15 Jun 1915, p.10, c.3-4
33. Ibid., 8 Sep 1916, p.3, c.6

of the Union in 1917, although she remained president of the Sumner Branch until her death.[34] Elizabeth Taylor, Tommy Taylor's widow, described her as a 'singularly beautiful and courageous character. This bravery was obvious to all whether they agreed with her on all points or not.'[35]

During the war, the Women's Christian Temperance Union absorbed almost all Elizabeth McCombs' political energies,[36] unlike other women who rose to prominance in the labour movement. The WCTU believed however, that it was close to the labour movement in spirit and aspiration, if not in formal connection. The Union declared in 1915 that 'There is a body of Labour in New Zealand ... that sees as we see, and strives as we strive ... we, Woman and Labour ... have the keys of all promise in our hands at last ....'[37] Elizabeth McCombs may well have believed at this time that in devoting herself to the WCTU she was assisting the rise of Labour.

By the outbreak of war, there was a deep public commitment to prohibition by almost every leading figure of the local political labour movement. Only one stood apart. Hiram Hunter was personally unconvinced. He saw that the evil results of drunkenness held back many working class families, but he did not believe that prohibition was the answer. Other coercive laws had not worked; the law clamping down on race-course betting had only driven it underground, the anti-shouting regulations were a farce. If made law, prohibition would, he claimed, have the most undesirable consequences, since while half the population wanted liquor they would procure it, on the black-market if necessary. He feared that the country would become an army of spies and informers. Another aspect of the prohibition movement also filled Hunter with

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34. LT 26 Apr 1917, p.5, c.4; Isabel Langford, op.cit., p.19
35. Ibid., 26 Apr 1917, p.5, c.4
36. Isabel Langford, op.cit., p.19
37. MW 22 Dec 1915, p.10, c.1

suspicion. He did not believe that his fellow-workers were 'a drunken lot' and the support that the rich and capitalist class gave to the movement made him wary; he believed that they may well have desired merely to produce a docile and sober workforce, to 'get the best' out of men by ensuring their sobriety.[38] However, during the war, Hunter largely kept these opinions to himself. He did not bring the issue of the liquor trade into prominence during the 1914 election campaign. If asked a direct question, Hunter evaded, by declaring that the SDP did not have a policy on liquor as such.[39]

Nevertheless, the open advocacy of other leading figures within the party, both men and women, unchecked by the expression of contrary opinion, was perceived by many voters as evidence of a party commitment. In all Christchurch electorates with SDP candidates in 1914, there was a significant correlation between the vote for prohibition and the vote for that party: prohibition supporters tended to vote SDP. This relationship was really striking however, only when there was a divergence of opinion between the candidates, as in Avon. In Christchurch East, Hunter faced Henry Thacker, a Liberal forthrightly opposed to prohibition. Although Hunter was secretly also opposed to prohibition, he belonged to the party which endorsed the bare majority in a referendum. This made him the preferable candidate in the estimation of prohibition voters.[40]

Like many of the public, many of the local SDP leaders had apparently convinced themselves by 1914 that the SDP was implicitly, if not explicitly, committed to prohibition. In reality, their proselytising for prohibition had not been questioned only because the issue as a whole had not been explored by the party, fully or at length. McCombs,

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38. LT 8 Apr 1919, p.13, c.4

39. Eg. Ibid., 26 Oct 1914, p.6, c.6; P 17 Nov 1914, p.8, c.7

40. See Appendix II. Computer programme results for correlation of voting SDP, Labour and national prohibition.

Sullivan and the others were able to continue their support for prohibition under the cloak of the SDP's wider commitment to democracy. The party believed in democratic decision-making, by the majority, unthwarted by a legislative machine which could arbitrarily make social change more difficult. James McCombs was fond of pointing out that the government itself had been elected with fewer votes than were cast for prohibition;[41] this was hardly justice, he declared.

Belief in decision by the majority in general necessarily included support for the bare majority in liquor polls in particular. SDP leaders in Christchurch slipped easily from advocating a democratic decision to calling for a particular kind of democratic decision. When McCombs, for instance, introduced a Parliamentary Bill calling for the initiative and referendum to make decision-making yet more democratic, he declared in Christchurch that he had acted on behalf of the SDP, and that the measure could be used to secure prohibition.[42]

Commitment by the leaders of the Christchurch SDP to prohibition and the consequent implication that it was a party commitment, was a state of affairs that could not last. There was already disagreement behind the scenes, and it was potentially a very divisive issue. There was strong opposition from some quarters of the industrial wing, for instance. Several trade unions were dependent upon the liquor trade for their very existence. The Hotel Workers and Brewery Workers did not welcome the prospect of unemployment which would necessarily follow with a change in the law. They campaigned against prohibition throughout the war every time that the issue came up for serious public consideration. There was some fear and confusion in the minds of many workers about the economic implications of prohibition. Protagonists only further confused the issue by manipulation of the statistics, each intent upon proving

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41. MW 5 Aug 1914, p.1, c.6
42. LT 31 Aug 1914, p.2, c.7

their particular argument - that the economy would go into recession or into boom, that unemployment would rise or fall. The Hotel Workers' Union played on these fears and others - when the Minister of Finance, Joseph Ward, was faced with the prospect of New Zealand as a 'beerless, cheerless land' he would start reaching into workers' pockets in order to raise revenue, the secretary warned.[43]

Generally, the industrial labour movement contained the tensions created by prohibition by refusing to discuss it. One or two leaders of the local industrial labour movement were openly in favour; Chris Renn, a Christchurch man, vice-president of the UFL in 1915, declared when he heard that the Czar had forbidden consumption of vodka ' ... total abstinence has been ordained in the largest empire under the sun. Socialism grows apace.'[44] But this was an exception, most passed no comment. Local unions like the General Labourers' refused point blank to discuss prohibition claiming social experiments should not be tried in war.[45] The Christchurch TLC declined to take part in demonstrations[46] and protested when it was discussed by industrial labour.[47] The UFL threw out liquor remits to the National Conference, declaring that they were likely to be divisive.[48]

Political labour was not able to dismiss the liquor problem in the same way. The advent of war had in fact made it more difficult for labour to grapple with. A feeling grew up in many parts of the community that there were new, and more forceful arguments for the abolition of liquor, or at least for the strict limitation of its availability: war-time was a time of national trial and in such a crisis, the civilian population

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43. LT 9 Apr 1919, p.11, c.4-5
44. MW 22 Dec 1915, p.9, c.6
45. General Labourers' Union Minutes, 5 Jun 1917
46. T.L.C. Minutes, 9 Jun 1917
47. Ibid., 21 Jul 1917
48. S 8 Sep 1917, p.12, c.1

should not fritter away its time in idle self-indulgence. It was an insult to those fighting at the front - the celebration of Anzac Day with wild and drunken exhuberance disgusted many who wanted the dead remembered with sober respect. The war threw up other arguments. It was thought that the nation was dissipating its will to fight, bleeding itself of energy and health through excessive indulgence in harmful and vice-ridden pastimes. The churches especially found this a persuasive argument:

> ... The British Empire, before she has brought Germany to her knees, will need every man and every penny, and the gambler and the drinker are destroying both the manhood and the wealth of the Empire .... [49]

Some went as far as condemning novel-reading and picture-going as vices equivalent in bad effects to drink, gambling and sexual licence.[50] These were the old puritan arguments that always drew a ready response from many of the non-conformist churches, but coupled with the argument of the nation's efficency for waging war, they became compelling to many who had hitherto held aloof from the agitation for prohibition. The Anglicans, who had never as a body endorsed prohibition in peace-time, had no such reservations by 1917:

> ... at this hour the Empire is sternly on duty .... The very existance of the Empire depends upon our most rigid economy and the sacrifice of all selfish indulgence .... No one who has the interest of his brethren at heart can possibly stand up for the drink traffic at this hour. [51]

The churches were furthermore horrified by the revealed prevalence of venereal disease among servicemen, and they took it for granted that

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49. Outlook 26 Jan 1915, p.3
50. War Cry 12 Jun 1915, p.4, c.1
51. Church News, 1 Jun 1917, p.2, c.2-3

drink was the root cause. Such soldiers were the 'direct and indisputable fruits of the Drink Traffic, which by its fatal and insidious influence spreads and fosters the horrible contagion'[52] declared the Presbyterians. Methodists were convinced that 'you may pass what laws you like to check venereal diseases', all were useless 'so long as you allow the opportunity of indulgence in alcoholic liquor ....'[53]

Farmers had their own set of arguments against the vices of drink and gambling. They feared that the workforce, already depleted by the numbers drawn off to the front, would be further eaten into by the distractions of pleasures at the racecourse and hotel. 'In war time people should curtail their pleasure' declared the president of the Canterbury Agricultural and Pastoral Association.[54]

Reinforced by arguments such as these, the tempo of the prohibition campaign increased. It was not surprising that the issue re-appeared at the first Annual Conference of the Labour Party in 1917. Prohibition had been discussed at every earlier SDP national conference. Even before the war, there were three distinct discernable points of view within the party. Some wanted the SDP to 'urge all workers to vote prohibition'. Others were convinced that this would alienate the sympathies of many supporters. These two factions were reconciled through the agreement that decisions at polling time should be made by the bare majority.[55] The third faction, however, pressed for state control, a measure which they believed in line with the party's objective of nationalisation. Pat Hickey, one of the leaders of the old 'Red' Federation of Labour, introduced the move at the SDP conference of 1914. Although a professed teetotaller, Hickey was nevertheless convinced that

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52. Outlook 17 Jul 1917, p.5, c.1
53. Methodist Times 27 Oct 1917, p.1, c.2
54. LT 18 Jan 1917, p.9, c.4
55. MW 22 Jul 1914, p.5, c.6

'Nationalisation was as necessary for liquor as for other matters.'[56] Although state control was not adopted as party policy, Hickey had not given up hope. He was sure that the 'last word had not been said on the liquor question.'[57] He was right.

In 1915 and 1916, Hiram Hunter spearheaded attempts to get the SDP to give state control a hearing. Through his union, the Timberyard Workers, Hunter secured the proposal of remits calling for state control to be added as a third option to the ballot paper at polling time.[58] Each Conference threw the remit out. In 1917, the same move came from another quarter. Michael Joseph Savage, representing Auckland brewery workers, put forward a proposal that Labour should simply declare for state control. Well aware that this would never succeed, Harry Holland and Hiram Hunter put forward a counter proposal, along the lines of Hunter's earlier remits. James McCombs, president of the party and its chief prohibitionist, then declared that he could not accept such a move. If it was made, he 'would not be able to remain a member of the party'.[59] The votes were cast and counted - the amendment had passed. McCombs rose and left the room.[60]

In Christchurch, there was stunned silence. Some days later, J.T. Paul wrote in Sullivan's regular newspaper column that the question 'had not been considered by any considerable section of the organised movement, and until it had it was a mistake, if not worse, to force it

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56. MW 22 Jul 1914, p.5, c.6
57. Ibid.
58. Ibid., 23 Jun 1915, p.5, c.2; Ibid., 23 Jun 1916, p.5, c.3
59. S 21 Jul 1917, p.12, c.1
60. Bruce Brown under-estimates the pre-history of the events at the 1917 Annual Conference. He refers to the move for state control as a 'bombshell' and attributes the 'reasonable compromise' of making it a third option solely to Harry Holland. Brown does not detect a shift of power within the labour movement which allows a North Island sponsored move to succeed in 1917 when similar moves from the South Island had earlier failed. See Bruce Brown, The Rise of Labour, 1962, p.30-1

on the Labour platform'.[61] Sullivan declared that Labour had no right to 'prejudice' prohibition by the introduction of state control.[62] This, indeed, was how most prohibitionists interpreted the incident. They believed that state control was a ploy to siphon votes off into a third option that itself had no chance of success and thus make it impossible to reach the required numbers for prohibition ever to become law. It was this, rather than state control itself, that aroused passions in 1917. McCombs had, in fact, earlier declared that if prohibition was found to be a failure, he would opt for state control.[63]

Within the Labour Party hierarchy the incident created great bitterness. Harry Holland declared that McCombs had made a 'stereotyped, bourgeoistic sneer at the ideals of labour and socialism,[64] and he believed that Christchurch rebels should be made to pay for so public a gesture of disagreement and revolt against party line. The least that should be required was for McCombs to 'come back and apologise'. 'And kiss the Pope's toe',[65] added J.T. Paul to Holland's intense anger. These antagonisms did not easily fade. There remained a coolness in the relations between McCombs and Holland until the day the former died. Furthermore, the events strengthened the parochialism that lay close to the surface of labour politics in Christchurch and which was evident in the formation of a Christchurch bloc within the Parliamentary Labour Party during the 1920s.[66]

The attack on McCombs was an attack on all those Christchurch labour leaders who were avowed prohibitionists. The SDP had permitted this commitment, even if it had not officially endorsed it, and Christchurch

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61. S 17 Jul 1917, p.3, c.1
62. Ibid., 21 Jul 1917, p.12, c.1
63. MW 5 Aug 1914, p.1, c.6
64. P.J. O'Farrell, op.cit., p.77
65. Ibid., p.122
66. Ibid.

leaders had persuaded themselves that as SDP candidates they stood as prohibitionists. McCombs defended his defection in these terms: '[the] political pledges which I made ... have in no way been violated ... no party has the right to demand that I shall acquiesce in a change of programme ....'[67] He believed that the fault lay not in him, nor in the SDP, but in the fledgling Labour Party, only a year old, but already sufficiently strong to tolerate the departure of its chief officer. In spite of the fact that Harry Holland reminded readers of the Maoriland Worker that the formation of the New Zealand Labour Party had been undertaken 'AT THE INSTIGATION OF MR. McCOMBS, who assured us that the change was desired by the members of the movement in Christchurch ... and the Woolston SDP'.[68] McCombs himself now saw the SDP as the party true to his ideals: 'Of course, I know that ..[my]. position would not be challenged by the SDP, under whose auspices I was elected.'[69]

McCombs was right. His move was not questioned by the Christchurch SDP - there was simply no public discussion. It was recognised that the issue was too explosive to risk heavy-handed debate. But if this was one lesson, Christchurch could see another in the whole unfortunate series of events. McCombs had been almost the sole Christchurch representative at the 1917 Labour Party conference and the only Christchurch leader present sympathetic to prohibition. If there had been more, the call for state control to be added to the ballot paper may have been thwarted. As it was, a move to refer the matter back to affiliates was only narrowly defeated.[70] It was clear that by not joining the Labour Party, the Christchurch SDP missed out on the opportunity to formulate policy and, by 1918, this was beginning to rebound upon them.

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67. MW 25 Jul 1917, p.3, c.6-7
68. Ibid., p.4, c.1-2
69. Ibid., p.3, c.6-7
70. S 21 Jul 1917, p.12, c.1

If prohibitionists in the political labour movement were being beaten back, the prohibition campaign in the general community was making headway. The government had set up an Efficiency Board shortly after the beginning of war, with instructions to investigate means of grooming the country for the war effort. At the beginning of August 1917, the Board finally reported. It came out for prohibition declaring in strictly utilitarian argument, it would be better for the nation if the 'inefficiency created by the effect of alcohol' were removed. The sale of liquor continued, the report stated, only because of national custom, and vested financial interest. However, the Board's strongest arguments were for a measure of early closing. Whether or not the government did move on prohibition, it should act immediately to restrict access to liquor, prohibiting all sales after six o'clock. Hotels at the time were open until eleven p.m. six evenings a week.[71]

Such a recommendation from a quasi-official body like the Efficency Board gave great joy to prohibitionists. They had been clamouring for some measure of early closing since the beginning of the war; this clinched their arguments. The labour movement was also sympathetic to the early closing of hotels, although not perhaps for the same reasons as prohibitionists. Restriction of hours of work was an old and traditional labour policy. The 1915 SDP Annual Conference called for the extension of the Shops and Offices Act, which restricted a working week to 44 hours, to be extended to cover hotels.[72] Labour did not see the call as a preliminary step to complete prohibition; the churches did. Clergymen declared that they were eager to work for six o'clock closing as an immediate object, but were opposed to the liquor traffic entirely - they were 'prepared to close the liquor bars at any

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71. LT 1 Aug 1917, p.7, c.1-2
72. MW 21 Jul 1915, p.6, c.4

hour, ... to close them for ever if they got the chance.'[73]

The calls for early closing became insistent and too great for parliament to resist. A Bill was introduced, and six o'clock closing became law in September 1917. Only two local MPs voted against, George Witty of Riccarton and Henry Thacker of Christchurch East.[74] Even George Russell, by this time a minister in the coalition war-time government, was in favour of six o'clock closing, whereas he had been adamantly opposed to prohibition in 1914. He was won over by patriotic arguments which stressed the need for a steady hand and a clear mind.

The passage of a six o'clock closing bill did nothing to take the energy out of the prohibition campaigns. Indeed it gave the armies of temperance new wind and they turned from victory on this limited front with renewed zest for the battle for total prohibition. They gave thanks in one breath and laid new plans in the next. The New Zealand Alliance decided to join forces with a section of the liquor trade which now believed that the Efficency Board Report had made inevitable the ultimate closure of hotels. These businessmen therefore wanted to secure the best possible settlement for compensation.[75] The Alliance in theory wanted no compensation for the brewers, but was prepared to accept such solution that was less than ideal if it meant securing the larger aim of prohibition.[76]

As in the pre-war campaigns, labour figures were brought to the country to front the Alliance's campaign. This time they came from Canada, where prohibition was a force to be reckoned with and had actually been adopted in some states. In July 1918, they arrived. W.D. Bayley and James Simpson were the two who stayed longest in the

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73. LT 18 Jul 1917, p.9, c.3
74. Ibid., 21 Sep 1917, p.4, c.7-8, p.5, c.1
75. Ibid., 9 Jul 1918, p.4, c.7
76. Ibid., 10 Jul 1918, p.7, c.1

country and had most effect. They were both energetic campaigners, addressing meetings that were often noisy and by no means unanimous. In Christchurch, Simpson had to scrape himself free of mud on at least one occasion.[77] Bayley tirelessly stumped around church circuits, meetings and conferences; Simpson wrote a series of pamphlets which were published and distributed throughout the country.

The Canadians had considerable contact with the New Zealand labour leaders. The TLC and the LRC in Christchurch sponsored public meetings which the Canadians addressed but the local labour movement was keen to draw the distinction between the Canadians' role as labour leaders and as prohibition campaigners. The New Zealanders wanted no inferences drawn from the one to the other.[78] The Labour Party recognised that it had to grapple with the liquor problem again, but no national solution had been hammered out by the time the Canadians arrived in the country. The breach created by McCombs' resignation was still unhealed and McCombs remained outside the party although he had begun to again address party gatherings.[79] Nor was the Christchurch labour movement affiliated to the NZLP. Under such circumstances, the locals preferred not to debate the issue in public. Silent separatism was better than open division.

The Annual Labour Party Conference in July 1918 devoted a great deal of time to the discussion of liquor. A strong faction wanted the removal of the clause which had caused McCombs to leave. Everyone recognised that divisions over such issues did the party nothing but harm and at a special night sitting a compromise was arrived at; the ballot should contain the three options as decided in 1917, but voting

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77. LT 12 Aug 1918, p.6, c.3
78. Ibid., 16 Sep 1918, p.4, c.7
79. MW 3 Jul 1918, p.2, c.4

should be preferential.[80] Thus the state control option could do prohibition no harm since it was accepted that state controllers would generally prefer prohibition to continuance. McCombs had already decided that he could accept such a compromise;[81] the stage was set for the rapid re-establishment of unity.

Events then moved quickly. The Labour Party decided to circulate two petitions, one calling for a general election and one for a referendum on liquor along the lines determined by the Conference in July. Almost immediately, James McCombs rejoined the party. He declared

> ... Prohibitionists like myself can have no objection to a method of voting which will give the electors the right to vote the traffic out .... I shall have pleasure as a member of the N.Z. Labor Party [sic] in helping to secure the restoration of political rights to the people and the granting of a democratic vote on the Licensing Question.[82]

Once McCombs rejoined, the way was clear for the rest of the Christchurch labour movement to follow suit. Without public loss of face, Christchurch was quietly reunited with the national movement.

Not that the general public had monitored these events in the Labour Party very closely. McCombs' resignation from the Labour Party in 1917 was hardly mentioned at all in the Christchurch daily newspapers. The churches however, took more interest. The Presbyterian magazine reprinted McCombs' letter explaining why he left the NZLP[83] and the editor was later pleased with the Labour petitions of 1918.[84] The Christchurch

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80. MW 24 Jul 1918, p.5, c.4-5
81. Ibid., 28 Aug 1918, p.5, c.5
82. Ibid., 2 Oct 1918
83. Outlook 31 Jul 1917, p.17, c.2-3
84. Ibid., 24 Sep 1918, p.1, c.2-3

Anglican Synod also endorsed these petitions.[85] Nevertheless, the impression remained widespread that Labour had opted for state control in 1917. Even the Presbyterian Outlook had then declared that the brewers had played their 'trump card' when they brought 'powerful financial interests to bear' persuading Labour to take the stand.[86] Such confusion was hardly surprising - a number of Labour's leaders themselves shared that misapprehension. At the 1918 Annual Conference, J.T. Paul was only one of a number who believed that in 1917 state control 'was placed on the Labor Party platform.' Those who could draw the distinction between this and calling for it to be added to the ballot paper, were exasperated. Harry Holland and Michael Joseph Savage again reiterated 'the question of state control itself was not raised at all.'[87]

A few weeks after the close of the NZLP conference, the government did decide to hold a referendum on liquor. Moreover, it structured the referendum in a way that was more sympathetic to prohibition than prohibitionists had dared to hope for. There were to be only two options, continuance and prohibition, and the decision was to be made by a bare majority. Gone was the hated three fifths majority in force for 16 years. 'At last we have the long-desired boon of a fair field',[88] rejoiced the Methodist Times. From all quarters of the prohibition movement, a sense of jubilation and a feeling of 'Do or Die', was in evidence. There would be other polls besides this special, extra one, but never again would conditions be so favourable for prohibitionists, since in future it was announced state control was to be added as a third option.

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85. LT 18 Oct 1918, p.4, c.6
86. Outlook 14 Jul 1917, p.3, c.2-3
87. MW 24 Jul 1918, p.5, c.4
88. Methodist Times 21 Dec 1918, p.8, c.2

Thus both prohibitionists and state control advocates within the Labour Party could take some heart and throughout New Zealand, Labour began an energetic campaign for the April 1919 poll. There was a new tolerance within the Labour Party. A conviction that each faction should be permitted full and free expression. Only thus could the matter be thoroughly gone into and purged from the political scene before the general elections were sprung. Even McCombs declared that it was best for the Labour Party to get the problem out of the way; it was 'obscuring other and greater issues'.[89]

During the early months of 1919, the air in Christchurch was alive with the harangues of propagandists from both sides of the liquor debate. As never before or again Christchurch Labour threw its weight behind prohibition. The commitment was both more open, and less official than in 1914. Individuals made it clear that their opinions were their own, but at the same time the party itself organised special rallies; speakers were shuffled across town to address crowds in different suburbs and the Salvation Army band played rousing music in the background.[90] McCombs, Sullivan and Howard took the leading parts each giving a slightly different slant to his argument. McCombs indulged his penchant for figures, explaining in mathematical relationships how higher death rates were related to liquor consumption, or how society's energies could be more effectively utilised and the cost of living reduced if only liquor was outlawed. Such utilitarian arguments had no appeal for Dan Sullivan. He was 'entirely influenced' by the humanitarian side of the question. The misery and degradation that he had seen result from liquor convinced him that prohibition was indeed the only answer. While Sullivan made it clear that he was expressing his own, not party opinion, he nevertheless

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89. LT 22 Mar 1919, p.9, c.4. See also S 22 Mar 1919, p.5, c.9, for Sullivan's identical attitude.

90. Eg. LT 7 Apr 1919, p.8, c.7

declared that the worker who was a prohibitionist was closer to the fundamental ideals of the Labour Party than was one who voted continuance. On no other 'Labour problem' was Sullivan so 'certain of his position as on prohibition'.[91]

Howard's arguments depended upon a collective analysis. He wanted liquor prohibited because it held the workers down, it had a 'deadening effect' upon the working class. Under its analgesic influence workers put up with conditions that should not be endured. 'Abolish beer, abolish slums' he declared.[92] Like the rest of the local labour movement, Howard's argument was aggressive, even defiant in tone. Christchurch Labour was adamant that it was within its rights in standing up for prohibition. At the same time, Christchurch was tolerant of the differences within the NZLP. Howard declared:

> In the North they had good and true members of the Labour Party out on the platform speaking in the interest of the Liquor party. The Labour Party had no platform on this question and as an individual he claimed the right to speak on behalf of Prohibition.[93]

The tensions that had caused the split of 1917 remained. The agreement to differ was new.

In April prohibition was only narrowly defeated by the votes of servicemen still in Europe. The whole of the prohibition movement paused deflated, exhausted by the failure of such an effort. The issue was not debated with the same urgency or to the same extent at the next poll in December at the time of the general elections. The liquor issue almost completely disappeared from the Labour Party campaign propaganda.

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91. LT 7 Apr 1919, p.8, c.6-7
92. Ibid., 8 Apr 1919, p.2, c.7
93. Ibid.

The issue had lost its power to impassion and divide and by general agreement was laid aside by the candidates. James McCombs himself would not discuss liquor. He dismissed the issue with the statement that Labour had 'no "attitude"'.[94] He had learned to toe the party line.

The part that Labour had played in the agitation for prohibition had little direct effect on party fortunes at the polls in 1919. James McCombs was deserted by voters at the municipal elections early in the year, but it was unlikely that this had anything to do with his stance on the liquor trade. Dan Sullivan levelled his usual charges of lack of organisation against the local Labour Party. The LRC had done no more than draw up a platform and nominate candidates, he said, but nevertheless Sullivan was angry that workers had given McCombs less than half the vote that he had achieved in 1917 when he led the local campaign. Until workers 'learn the meaning of the word solidarity they will accomplish very little',[95] Sullivan declared. He had himself done very well in the city council elections. His majority was second only to Harry Herbert, among Labour candidates, although both Sullivan and Herbert had taken a role in the prohibition movement that was almost as prominent as James McCombs.

During the general elections at the end of 1919, prohibition certainly had little influence on the number of votes that the Labour Party candidates scored in Christchurch. The correlation that had existed in 1914 between the prohibition vote and the vote for the SDP existed no longer. The Labour Party contested seats that had never had a Social Democratic candidate and in such seats the close co-operation between prohibition and labour forces that had existed in Avon for instance, were missing. In Christchurch North, the Liberal candidate was

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94. LT 18 Nov 1919, p.8, c.1
95. S 3 May 1919, p.5, c.1

Leonard Isitt, undoubtedly by then the city's best-known prohibitionist. Voters who put the abolition of liquor above all other issues would almost certainly have preferred him to Tim Armstrong.

In the old SDP strongholds, there was still some faint trace discernible of the old associations. In Avon, Lyttelton and Christchurch East in 1919 the correlation between voting Labour and prohibition was higher than in other electorates, but nowhere was it significant.[96] Prohibition had become an extraneous issue. Other matters had become more important. The war and associated problems had brought about a change in the nature of the party, and in the way it was viewed by the mass of Christchurch voters by 1919.

However, the liquor issue had subtly affected the party image in other ways. Prohibition was a major factor in reconciling the churches to a more favourable view of Labour by 1919, than they had had at any time during the war itself. Before 1914, there had existed a considerable degree of goodwill. Through the Church Socialist League, the Anglican church had been in regular close contact with labour leaders and trade unions in the city.[97] Even in the 1914 general elections, some clergymen had declared for the SDP[98] and Arthur Liversedge, one of the most prominent Methodists in Christchurch had chaired campaign meetings for Dan Sullivan.[99]

However, the war destroyed this amity as the attitudes of the churches and the labour movement rapidly diverged. In general, the churches adopted a most uncritical form of patriotism. The war was seen as a battle between the forces of darkness and light:

> All groups and parties realise ... that the fundamental principles of liberty, humanity and self-government are

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96. See Appendix II for computer programme, figures and discussion
97. See Chapter VI., p. 221-4
98. S 17 Jul 1917, p.3, c.1
99. Eg. LT 30 Oct 1914, p.6, c.7

> at stake .... The Prussian gospel is really the philosophy of Nietzsche. It ... sets aside mercy and charity as weakness and Christianity as ... an effeminate superstition. Against this we are fighting for all the world had gained in the way of humanity and liberty ... pray with a good conscience that the God of truth will strengthen our hands ....[100]

Jingoism was rife and it was easy for any criticism of the war effort to be construed as disloyalty. The labour movement's resistance to conscription came in for a good deal of vilification. In 1917, when Christchurch labour fought the local body elections on the plank of conscription repeal, there was outrage in local churches. The election fell on Anzac Day and this was seen as a supreme irony; at least one clergyman exploded with indignation at the 'parody'.[101]

At the same time, miners on the West Coast went on strike to secure exemption from conscription and this added fuel to the fire of denunciation. 'We have reached a pitiable pass' declared the Methodist Times, when any considerable number of men can take up an attitude that

> is so plainly subversive .... If anything could increase the odiousness ... it is the fact that it takes place when the country is under the strain of helping to save the Empire from the cruel and crushing despotism of the German Hun.[102]

Few churches had sympathy with the labour calls for recognition of the justice of conscientious objection. Apart from the Quakers who remained consistently sympathetic, only the Christchurch Presbytery openly called for the claims of conscientious objectors to be recognised. The

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100. Church News 1 Oct 1914, p.2, c.3

101. Eg. Rev. O. Fitzgerald, Holy Trinity Church, Avonside, LT 23 Apr 1917, p.9, c.6

102. Methodist Times 28 Apr 1917, p.2, c.1

Presbytery believed that the right of conscientious objection flowed from the traditional British right to freedom of speech and conscience.[103] Even so, many members of the Presbyterian congregation publicly dissented from the calls of their clergy.

By July 1917, many churchmen, even some of those who had been most sympathetic to the pre-war labour movement,[104] were alienated from Labour. They had come to equate criticism with opposition to the war effort, and resistance to conscription with acceptance of German victory and rule. In spite of the fact that Dan Sullivan protested that he had talked to everyone in the labour movement, from 'Marxian Socialist to Philosophical Anarchist'[105] without ever hearing such pro-German sympathies expressed, the impression of Labour disloyalty was fixed in the minds of many.

The results of the Russian Revolution caused horror in New Zealand churches and prompted further attacks upon the Labour Party. The initial reaction to events in Russia had not been unenthusiastic, although there was a distinct feeling of misgiving: '... there can be no guarantee that the Russian revolution has reached its climax .... A nation needs to serve a certain apprenticeship to liberty before it is safe to prophesy that ... liberty will not degenerate into licence.'[106] As regular, if not accurate news, began to filter through to New Zealand, the churches began to believe their worst fears realised. By 1919, the seeds of the Russian worker's 'bitter discontent' had indeed ripened into a harvest of 'madcap communism .... the far more cruel tyranny of Lenin and Trotsky'.[107] Any suggestion that New Zealand Labour was sympathetic to the Russians was bound to bring down a storm of denunciation from the

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103. Outlook 18 Jul 1916, p.8, c.1-3, p.25, c.1-2
104. S 14 Jul 1917, p.12, c.1
105. Ibid.
106. Methodist Times 14 Apr 1917, p.5, c.1
107. Ibid., 19 Jul 1919, p.8, c.2

churches.

In February 1919, Bob Semple made a stopover in Christchurch during a nationwide campaign for the restoration of civil rights to conscientious objectors, still being victimised although war had ended. Warming to his enthusiastic audience, Semple proceeded from a denunciation of the New Zealand government to an eulogy of the Russian Bolshevik government. 'I glory in the Russian working-men's pluck', he declared 'and wish there was more of it in New Zealand. If I were in Russia I would be with Trotsky and Lenin.'[108] By unfortunate coincidence Semple's impassioned expressions of admiration coincided with the arrival in New Zealand of a garbled cable which announced that in common with the means of production, distribution and exchange, the Russians had nationalised women.

The horror already existing in the minds and breasts of Christchurch's respectable community now redoubled: sexual licence was added to political anarchy. Clergymen wrote to newspapers denouncing Semple for his supposed desire to make women public property held in common by all men.[109] Jessie Mackay, womens editor of the Press and one of the city's best known poets and authors, declared that all women must disavow Bolshevism and that for its part, the Labour Party had either to 'repudiate Mr. Semple or to chloroform him.'[110] The furore was only added to by those who sprang to Semple's defence, calling both press and pulpit 'agencies of the devil'.[111]

For his part, Semple evidently rather enjoyed the hubbub he had caused, but others were worried about the reaction within the churches. The Methodist and Presbyterian General Assemblies both convened in

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108. LT 17 Feb 1919, p.3, c.5
109. Eg. Ibid., 22 Feb 1919, p.9, c.1
110. Ibid., 21 Feb 1919, p.6, c.3
111. Eg. F. Acton, Ibid., 20 Feb 1919, p.5, c.2

Christchurch soon after Semple made his speech. Feeling against him in particular, and the Labour movement in general ran high. It required no little courage to take up the cudgels for labour in Christchurch 'at a time ... and in a place where the very name of Labour has recently been made odious by the extravagant utterances of Mr. Robert Semple, M.P.'[112] The Labour Party itself had few contacts in such upper echelons of the churches to put a case for its defence from within. However, W.D. Bayley, the Canadian labour leader, was present at both General Assemblies, ostensibly to present a report on the progress of prohibition. Bayley saw the drift of opinion, and on his own initiative he used each occasion to argue a case for Labour. He painted a very different picture of Semple and the labour movement to the one his listeners had seen before.

Bayley took the Presbyterian General Assembly by storm. He gave a vivid narration of Semple's work for consumptive miners and explained how it was understandable that such men, 'turned down' time after time, should on occasions lose their heads and talk wildly. The Assembly burst into warm applause; Bayley's satisfaction was evident. 'When I tell Bob', he declared, 'he will smile a little and say: "I won't say damn so often"'.[113] The Canadian then went on to argue that movements like Bolshevism could be prevented only by giving 'justice to the workers .... It was only injustice and denial of facts that caused revolutions'.[114] He was again applauded and given a vote of 'hearty appreciation' for his presentation of the 'ideals and purposes of the Labour movement'.[115] The President of the Canterbury Employers' Federation was the first to take him by the hand at the conclusion of his speech.[116]

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112. Methodist Times 15 Mar 1919, p.10, c.2
113. Outlook 4 Mar 1919, p.35, c.2
114. Ibid.
115. Ibid., c.3
116. Ibid., c.4

A few days later, Bayley spoke again to the Methodists. This time the reception was not so uniformly warm. There was some resentment that he had seen fit to criticise mildly the opening remarks of the President of the Assembly[117] and considerable irritation that he saw any need to deliver a lecture to Methodists at all: '... he failed to recognise what we know from within, that many of the ideals and improved conditions for labour which he advocated have been and are being faithfully preached by the ministry of our church.'[118] Nevertheless, it was agreed that the speech would 'not die away in its effects upon those who heard it ....'[119] Many Presbyterian churchmen returned to their congregations with altered opinions and alerted sympathies. As far away as Port Chalmers, Bayley's 'consummate oration' was printed and distributed.[120]

Meanwhile James Simpson, the other Canadian labour leader in the country for the campaign of the New Zealand Alliance was not idle. He wrote a series of articles dealing with labour and liquor and argued that whatever its official and formal stance, the labour movement was in truth a prohibition movement. 'Prohibition Labour's Slogan', he boldly declared. When the announcement of Labour's decision to press for a liquor poll with preferential voting coincided with the publication of some of Simpson's work, many clergymen regarded it as providential: Labour declared that the reason for its action was to 'protect and preserve' democratic principles. Simpson had proved 'most conclusively' that the liquor trade, even under the 'specious guise' of state control, was undemocratic. Hence Labour must demand prohibition. 'Anything short of this would be sheer stultification of all that Labour stands for.'[121]

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117. Methodist Times 15 Mar 1919, p.7, c.1
118. Ibid., p.2, c.1
119. Ibid., p.7, c.7
120. Outlook 11 Mar 1919, p.8, c.3
121. Ibid., 24 Sep 1918, p.1, c.3

The Editor of the Presbyterian Outlook argued that Presbyterian men and women should now make it their business to move into the Labour Party and if it was objected

> that to seek to capture the Labour Party for Christ and His Kingdom is trenching upon the political arena, we at once make response that it is high time the Church of God, and in particular the Presbyterian Church went into politics.[122]

The open espousal of prohibition by Christchurch Labour during the April 1919 campaign can have only served to strengthen such interest by the churches. Some Labour figures used the very words and phrases that Simpson had written in their own arguments.[123] Other events served to further reinforce the impression that the party's 'true' policy was one of prohibition. Harry Holland, who was ever mindful that an issue like prohibition should never be allowed to override Labour's commitment to class, had retired from the editorship of the Maoriland Worker soon after his election to Parliament in late 1918. The man who took over, J. Kraig, shared few of Holland's reservations and only days before the crucial polling day in the liquor referendum wrote an editorial declaring that true labourites should vote prohibition. 'To vote out the traffic is the clear duty of all who have the interests of Labor [sic] at heart', declared Kraig. He called upon all Labour men and women to 'do their clear duty ... by ... giving a death-blow to one of the worst forms of production for profit.'[124] Holland, as leader of the Parliamentary wing, was acutely embarrassed and issued a public disclaimer.[125]

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122. Outlook 24 Sep 1918, p.4, c.2
123. Eg. James McCombs, LT 22 Mar 1919, p.9, c.4. Cf. Outlook 24 Sep 1918, p.1, c.1
124. MW 26 Mar 1919, p.2, c.1
125. Bruce Brown, op.cit., p.31

But the prohibition forces had taken note. The editorial was used as propaganda in their own later campaigns but more important, the paper's stand on prohibition helped to win it their more sympathetic attention for its view in other matters. Even Bob Semple's articles were regarded with a new indulgence. The Outlook reprinted his explanations of the reasons for the unrest on the coalfields soon after the end of the war.[126] The Presbyterians then believed that the Maoriland Worker, 'under its present editorship'[127] was well worth the attention of 'ministers and all others who desire to assist in the reconciliation between Labour and Capital ....'[128]

In the months immediately after the end of the First World War, there was a general revival of interest and sympathy for the New Zealand labour movement on the part of almost all the churches, even those who had generally stood aloof from the main prohibition debate. The Christchurch Anglican Synod of 1919 for instance, held a special inquiry into 'Christianity and Industrial Problems'.[129] Labour's supposed commitment to prohibition had little to do with the origins of such concern; fear was perhaps more important. There had been world wide working-class unrest during the war, the Russian Revolution and the rise of Bolshevism was only one of the most dramatic and successful examples. Anglicans and other churches saw in this a moral: the Russian people had been neglected, this neglect had bred discontent and revolution followed in which the church was wholly destroyed. The same could happen in the west, if western workers were forced along the same miserable path. In became imperative for the churches to interest themselves in working class conditions and improve them; thus happily forwarding God's work and securing their own future.

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126. Outlook 10 Jun 1919, p.4, c.1
127. Ibid.
128. Ibid.
129. Year Book 1919. Twenty Third Synod, 1918-1919. 'Report of the Select Committee on Christianity and Industrial Problems'.

As early as 1916 in Britain, the Anglican Church began a process of self-examination. A special committee was set up, consisting of some of the leading British Anglican clergy and a number of interested intellectuals, one of whom, R.H. Tawney, later became closely involved with the formation of the British Labour Party. In 1918, this committee reported. It described the 'lamentable failure' of the church in not giving consideration to the social determinants of behaviour and in passing over the contradictions between living Christianity and the operation of the capitalist industrial system.[130]

During the second half of the war, this impetus for analysis and action within the parent English Church began to filter through to New Zealand. The Christchurch Synod of 1917 set up a number of special committees to investigate aspects of the Anglican ministry. Next year, the Synod looked more closely at industrial problems and made a number of demands which echoed Labour policy - a living wage, confiscation of excessive profits made in industry, better housing and regulation of hours and conditions of work for women and children. The Synod recommended re-organisation of industry along the lines of the Whitely Report[131] which proposed worker-management co-operation. The Whitely Report also kindled Dan Sullivan's enthusiasm and was endorsed by the United Federation of Labour in 1919.[132]

Churches in Christchurch set aside special days for the discussion of their relationship with Labour.[133] There was still considerable fear of Bolshevism and any hold it might get on the party. One Methodist minister harangued his congregation on the subject 'Bolshevism and its Antidote':

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130. See J.M. Winter, Socialism and the Challenge of War. Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1974, p.172-4

131. Year Book 1919. Twenty Third Synod, op.cit.

132. See Chapter V, p. 173-5

133. Eg. LT 10 Jun 1919, p.7, c.3

he railed against the 'anarchy pure and simple' which had reigned in Russia since 'the enthronement of chaos and the dethronement of God'.[134] But most churchmen were more restrained and some explored in detail points of similarity and the essential unity between the teachings of Christ and socialist ideas.[135]

The labour movement in general[136] was aware of the revival of interest by the churches and in Christchurch leading labour figures attended services the special labour day services.[137] Christchurch labour had never been alienated from, or contemptuous of the churches. James McCombs had at one time studied for the Anglican Ministry. He abandoned that attempt because the qualifications for study were too burdensome and later became more interested in theosophy.[138] Dan Sullivan and Tim Armstrong were Roman Catholics. Armstrong was not a regular church attender, but took his rosary with him to prison when sent to gaol for sedition in 1917. He later became firm friends with Bishop Brodie, the Roman Catholic Bishop of Christchurch; it was Brodie who delivered the oration at Armstrong's funeral in 1942.[139] Sullivan was always anxious that his church should be given her due in the story of the uplift of mankind. He spoke of how, 'under the stress of Socialist criticism the church was returning to her ancient conception and teachings concerning social morality'; the 'beneficent effects of the social policy of the medieval church' were about to be seen again in the ministry of the contemporary Church.[140]

Sullivan was anxious that Labour should not be branded anti-church

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134. LT 10 Jun 1919, p.7, c.3
135. Ibid.; and Ibid. 27 Oct 1919, p.7, c.6
136. MW 19 Mar 1919, p.7, c.3
137. Eg. LT 10 Jun 1919, p.7, c.3, Tim Armstrong and Fred Burgoyne
138. Interview, Sir Terence McCombs, 12 Dec 1978
139. Bernard Kendrick, op.cit., p.69, 138
140. S 10 Apr 1915, p.12, c.3

or atheist. It was possible for a socialist to be religious; not all were followers of Marx nor believed with Lenin that religion was the opium of the people. 'I know it is possible to make a statement of socialism that is neither atheistic nor irreligious', he wrote.[141]

Ted Howard was less interested in the established churches during the war. He had been brought up in the Church of England and had once himself been a 'dear little choirboy'.[142] His sister became a deaconess,[143] a fact of which he was proud, and his brother died a Roman Catholic convert.[144] However Howard himself became more interested in Christian Socialism. Even before the war, he had had considerable contact with Christian Socialists of the Anglican Church Socialist League. He had taken in the advice of its leaders that 'practical Christianity' was socialism.[145] Howard himself referred to the 'divine gospel' of socialism and the 'spirit' of the Labour movement.[146] During the war, his Christian Socialist beliefs found outlet in the Socialist Sunday School.[147]

Thus at grass-roots level there existed many links and much sympathy between the labour movement and the churches. Prohibition did not forge any new ones but it helped revitalise the old. Furthermore it gave a fixed direction to this renewed sympathy for labour. During the 1914-18 war, and immediately after, when most political issues were dividing the church and the labour movement, sympathy for prohibition remained the one point of consistent contact. At a time when Labour's

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141. S 24 Aug 1915, p.5, c.1-2
142. MW 6 Feb 1918, p.5, c.6
143. Howard Papers, M.S. 980/2
144. Ibid.
145. MW 26 Apr 1913, p.6, c.5
146. Eg. LT 21 Nov 1919, p.7, c.8
147. See Chapter II, p.

contacts with those at the top of the church hierarchies were few, congruence of ideas on prohibition gave the party a voice where it had no presence - in the counsels of the church. Because of prohibition, influential churchmen and those who controlled church publications had turned more attentively and sympathetically to the Labour Party. Once attracted, this attention generalised and by the end of 1919 many churchmen were openly sympathetic to many of Labour's policies. During its campaign, Labour propaganda made much of the fact that many 'reverend gentlemen'[148] could be numbered among its supporters. This did more to give the party an acceptable image in the eyes of many workers than anything Labour leaders themselves could say. Labour could not be the insane wrecker of society that its enemies declared if the clergy gave their endorsement. In Christchurch at least, God was on the side of the Labour Party.

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148. 1919 Election pamphlet. Howard Papers, M.S. 980/75

CHAPTER V:

LABOUR AND THE COST OF LIVING

The rise in the cost of living was the one wartime issue which worked wholly in the favour of Christchurch Labour. Prohibition helped the party indirectly by sustaining and directing the sympathy of the churches, but at the same time it publicly revealed tensions, both within the local labour movement and in its relations with the rest of the national movement. Conscription brought the party a notoriety which threatened to damage political fortunes. Both these issues created problems which Labour surmounted by learning and exercising tolerance and discipline. This may have been schooling in political skills, but the lessons were difficult and dangerous. There were no such complications with the wartime rise in the cost of living.

The Christchurch labour movement was unable to do anything to curb the dramatic rise in the cost of living after 1914, but their arguments against it were clear and compelling. The whole issue redounded to their credit. By the time the general elections took place in late 1919, economic arguments were the main weapons in Labour's campaign armoury.

There was a general expectation in 1914 that the war would produce some kind of economic dislocation, but uncertainty about the form it would take. Some clergymen foresaw widespread distress and unemployment. Their congregations were warned to be frugal, since times would be hard.[1] The Arbitration Court adjourned hearings on wages settlements 'until normal conditions were reached'. A workers' representative declared that 'Labour would do its utmost to help the best interests of the country, and it would be found that every man among them would uphold the tradition of

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1. Outlook 18 Aug 1914, p.3

Britons.'[2]

But almost immediately, as the economic effects of the war began to be felt, there were ominous signs that employers would readily sacrifice workers for profit. Employers took advantage of the suspension of the Arbitration Court hearings to refuse to grant any wage increases whatsoever. Eight months later, the Court itself decided that in view of the high prices and the country's great prosperity, this was unjust. Employers' protests were dismissed as 'rhetorical exaggeration'.[3] The hearing of disputes and claims was resumed.

During the first few months of the war, it seemed that the gloomy forecasts of widespread unemployment were to be more than fulfilled. In Christchurch a number of contractors cut back or cancelled work that they had in hand as soon as war was declared. Within hours, hundreds of men were thrown out of work.[4] The unskilled were hardest hit, builders' labourers in particular.[5] Big meetings of unemployed began to gather each day on the banks of the Avon River outside the City Council Chambers, demanding work or relief.[6] Some leaders of the SDP wanted the Government to issue state notes to the men.[7] The City Council and the other local bodies bore as always the main burden of the organisation of relief work. A number of jobs were created by the building of the 'Zig zag', the Lyttelton-Sumner roadway, for which the government was finally persuaded to give a pound for pound subsidy.[8]

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2. LT 7 Aug 1914, p.11, c.6
3. Ibid., 27 Mar 1915, p.3, c.6
4. Ibid., 29 Aug 1914, p.7, c.7. Calls were made for unemployed women to come forward also, but none were reported as doing so, Ibid., p.7, c.6
5. Ibid., 13 Aug 1914, p.9, c.6
6. Eg. Ibid., 1 Sep 1914, p.4, c.7
7. Eg. MW 23 Sep 1914, p.4, c.4
8. LT 8 Oct 1914, p.9, c.5

Almost as suddenly as it had erupted, unemployment disappeared as a public issue. Some of the slack in the workforce was undoubtedly taken up by men volunteering for the front - the unskilled were the only group in the community over-represented among servicemen during the first year of the war.[9] Some unemployment remained in Christchurch, but that was usual since unemployment was recognised as an endemic problem in the city. Every year there was this 'confused muddle'[10] complained Dan Sullivan. The significance of the upsurge in numbers during late 1914 lay in its direct relationship to employers' exploitive attitude to the war. Those labour leaders who believed that the war was no more than a cynical exercise by capitalists for their own ends, were confirmed in their beliefs. Fred Cooke addressed gatherings of the unemployed 'calling down maledictions on capitalists, financial magnates and other "bloodsuckers" for tying up their purse strings ...'[11] But Dan Sullivan, more enthusiastic about the war effort, 'did not wish to say anything that would stir up class feelings ....'[12]

However, it soon became clear that the rising cost of living, not unemployment, was to be the economic by product of the war that the workers had to struggle with. Prices and nominal wages both rose, but prices rose faster and further than wages. Real wages consequently dropped to a point lower than at any previous time in the twentieth century.[13]

Some price rises were blatant attempts at profiteering. On the very first day of the war, there were reports in Chrictchurch of prices increasing by as much as 80%.[14] Many had anticipated such profiteering

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9. James McCombs' figures, LT 20 Sep 1914, p.8, c.7
10. S 20 Feb 1915, p.12, c.1
11. LT 1 Sep 1914, p.4, c.7
12. Ibid., 3 Sep 1914, p.4, c.7
13. See Fig. 5.1
14. LT 22 Apr 1915, p.6, c.6

and it was widely condemned. If the editors of church magazines did not quite join Harry Holland the editor of the Maoriland Worker, in declaring that the propelling forces at the back of the whole 'bloody and damnable conspiracy is DIVIDENDS, DIVIDENDS, DIVIDENDS ...'[15] they did agree that patriotism 'should render impossible the accumulation of huge furtunes ...'[16]

Prices and price rises were not uniform throughout New Zealand. On aggregate Christchurch was probably the cheapest city in which to live during the war, and Wellington the dearest. Groceries and dairy products were generally cheaper locally than in the other main centres, but on the other hand meat was dearer[17] and became comparatively even more expensive[18] as the war dragged on. Fuel and light was more expensive in Christchurch than in the other centres, nor was this just a reflection of the climate, since the rate was cheaper in Dunedin,[19] the southernmost city. Rents in Christchurch were comparable to those paid in Auckland and Dunedin, all lower than Wellington prices.[20] Rents may not have been the issue in Christchurch that they were in the other main centres, since the incidence of renting was low in the city. Nearly two-thirds of Christchurch people owned, or were on the process of buying their own home, and this proportion was much the same in both the working class and upper class areas.[21]

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15. MW 5 Aug 1914, p.4, c.2
16. Eg. Outlook 18 Aug 1914, p.1
17. See Fig. 5.2; fig 5.3; fig. 5.4
18. Figures given by Dan Sullivan: Source: S 18 May 1918, p.5, c.1

City	% increase 31 July 1914 - 13 March 1918
Auckland	24.80
Wellington	34.22
Christchurch	43.18
Dunedin	41.86

19. See Fig. 4.5
20. See Fig. 4.6
21. See Chapter I, p.21, fn.76

However, the fact that it was probably cheaper to live in Christchurch than in the other main centres during the 1914-18 war was little comfort for the local workers. They could see that their wages did not go as far as they had formerly done. Moreover, with each year of the war, wages fell further behind prices. Public opinion was rapidly mobilised. Only a few weeks after the fighting began, more than two and a half thousand people crowded into the Square in response to a newspaper advertisement by Henry Thacker, Liberal MP for Christchurch East. Thacker attacked the Reform government of William Massey for its 'apathy and ineptitude' and he railed against the 'fat farmers', sitting on more wheat than could possibly be consumed while city people paid famine prices for a loaf of bread.[22] Yet this was before the price rises really got under way; the index figure for dairy produce actually fell during that quarter in Christchurch and meat and grocery prices remained nearly stationary.[23]

For Labour there were at least four different possible strategies for grappling with the problem of the rising cost of living. Labour could agitate for price controls to keep goods and services down to the level of wages, or conversely for wage increases to keep pace with the level and rate of price increases. Alternatively Labour could argue for the confiscation and redistribution of war profits into the hands of the impoverished. Finally the party could look for some means of circumventing the whole problem. In fact, Labour tried all four arguments and stratagems, some with more success than others.

The Reform Party, in power when the war broke out, was sympathetic to the farmer. Massey had himself been a dairy farmer. He understood and remained attuned to their needs and aspirations. Such a Prime Minister

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22. P 30 Nov 1914, p.10, c.7-8
23. See Fig. 5.2, fig. 5.3, fig. 5.4

was unlikely to move to control retail prices by restricting the price a farmer could earn for his produce. Maximum prices for wheat and flour were gazetted at one point, but they were soon lifted.[24] Massey declared that farmers were entitled to every penny they could get for their produce and 'to pay them less would be to confiscate part of their earnings'.[25]

Labour gave up all chance of exercising direct pressure on the government for the imposition of some form of price control when it refused to join the war-time coalition that was formed in August 1915. The Liberals, who did join, made it a pre-condition of their co-operation that some firm measures should be taken on the cost of living. The Liberal leader Ward, became Minister of Finance in the coalition, a key position from which to take effective action to control both prices and wages. If the impossibility of meddling with the incomes of farmers was self-evident to the Reform Party, the urgent need for action on behalf of city dwellers was strongly argued by many urban-based Liberals who were well aware of the discontent of their constituents. Leonard Isitt, from Christchurch North, described in Parliament his experiences as he walked around his electorate. The cost of living, he said, was

> the one issue I was talked to about. I was stopped in the street not once but a dozen times ... and I was asked "What are the Government going to do [sic] about the cost of living? Are they going to take definite and drastic action?" ...[26]

In spite of the concern of such urban-based Liberal backbenchers, the Liberals in the Cabinet did little that was effective to combat the

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24. LT 30 Sep 1914, p.8, c.6; Ibid., 8 Feb 1915, p.7, c.1
25. Ibid., 8 Feb 1915, p.6, c.2
26. P.D., Vol 174, p.777

rising cost of living. Nearly two months elapsed before Ward produced any sort of legislation on the issue, and then his Cost of Living Bill was a disappointingly weak measure.

A Board of Trade was established, but given power merely to investigate and report, not to compell, or fix prices. Effective remedies still depended upon the resolve of the government. Christchurch MPs were in general, dissatisfied. Isitt declared that it left him in a 'very unhappy frame of mind ... cannot express my disappointment at the limitations of the Bill ...'[27] Harry Ell, the member for Christchurch South, could not find anything in the Bill 'which is going to be operative as far as the cost of living is concerned'.[28] Yet the Cost of Living Act was the only such measure produced by Liberal Ministers who had protested so loudly about the issue before they secured positions within the coalition.

It is unlikely a labour minister could have achieved anything within such a ministry. Ward never pursued the imposition of price controls, in spite of the fact that he had the legislative power. Massey remained openly contemptuous of the idea. Trade unions never ceased to condemn government inaction, and demand price controls - by a government takeover of the food supply if necessary.[29] Massey simply dismissed the 'epidemic of resolutions'.[30] By remaining outside the government, labour at least escaped the blame and odium that came to be heaped upon the other two parties by working-class city dwellers.

It there was no way labour could work for price controls, there was at least some machinery at hand to work for wage increases. Where labour

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27. P.D., Vol 174, p.776

28. Ibid., p.760

29. Eg. General Labourers' Union, Minutes 29 Sep 1914; Metal Workers' Assistants' Union, LT 21 Oct 1914, p.8, c.6; T.L.C. Minutes 18 Mar 1915, Sawmill, Timberyard and Coalyard Workers LT 9 Apr 1915, p.6, c.8; Moulders' Union, MW 14 Apr 1915, p.5, c.3

30. LT 23 Apr 1915, p.6, c.2,3

had the political power, it was able to immediately raise wages. The SDP controlled the Woolston Borough Council by the outbreak of war and the party there ensured that its own employees at least kept pace with the cost of living. The SDP Borough Councillors believed it their 'duty to see that their employees were reasonably paid'.[31] Generally, however, labour did not have control of the political machine in this fashion. Wage increases were secured through arbitration. The Arbitration Court resumed hearings in February, 1915, and almost immediately it began to take the high cost of living into consideration when making awards. At first this was made a factor in deciding the award rates of the lowest paid workers only.[32] Unions readily saw that this meant skilled workers did not retain parity.[33] In April 1916, the Arbitration Court recommended that a war bonus of 10% should be awarded to all workers. There was a certain limited satisfaction in Christchurch labour circles. Ted Howard was pleased that 'for the first time the Court had nationalised the issue and spoken in the spirit which it ought to speak', but he very much doubted that employers would in fact pay out.[34] Howard's misgivings were promptly shown to have substance. The President of the Canterbury Employers' Federation said that universal application would be impossible 'at present' and the Secretary saw 'difficulties in the way'.[35]

It was soon obvious to the labour movement that a 10% increase in wages was in any case hardly an equal sacrifice in view of the ever-increasing prosperity of producers and manufacturers. The Arbitration Court was itself moving towards the same realisation. 'It has to be remembered' declared the Court 'that the increased cost of living, so far as it is caused by the war, is a burden which has to be borne by

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31. MW 9 Jun 1915, p.7, c.6
32. G.W. Clinkard, op.cit., p.911-2
33. Eg. S 8 Apr 1916, p.12, c.1
34. LT 5 Apr 1916, p.4, c.5
35. Ibid.

> the whole community, and that to relieve one class of its proper portion of that burden simply means adding that proportion to the burden already being borne by the other classes ...'[36]

But acceptance of the principle did not necessarily mean assistance to the worker in practice. As the war progressed, workers became progressively disenchanted with the Court. Unions finally turned decisively against it. Discontent with the small scale of increases in award rates existed from the moment the Court resumed war-time hearings. However, union leaders like Dan Sullivan thought at first that at least part of the problem was of the workers' own making, and lay in the way they had utilised the Court. Sullivan contrasted the often ill-informed and disorganised presentation of union advocates with the polished performance of employers and argued for a reorganisation of trade unions after the model of the Employers' Federation: a central office to collect, collate and analyse relevent data and a central secretariat, rather than a number of part-time union secretaries scattered throughout the city.[37]

However, by the middle of the war it was clear that organisation was not at the root of the problem. No matter how well a case was presented, the Court would not make awards that kept up with the cost of living. Ted Howard was a very experienced campaigner on the union front. He at least knew how to expertly marshall and present his arguments in Court. In February 1917 Howard put the case of the unskilled labourer at a sitting of the Court in Christchurch. The evidence was persuasive; a vivid picture of considerable privation emerged. There were families in Christchurch who had not eaten for three days together.[38] Wives

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36. G.W. Clinkard, op.cit., p.912
37. S 15 Feb 1916, p.12, c.1
38. Ibid., 8 Feb 1917, p.10, c.4

of unionists gave evidence in Court. They described their finances and presented model minimum budgets that allowed their families to exist. These budgets were itemised and scrutinised. Everyone, including the employers' advocate, agreed that £3 a week was the absolute minimum wage that would allow a family even a bare subsistence. The Court then awarded 35/-.[39]

There was an explosion of resentment in local labour circles. Ted Howard described the award as the 'biggest failure'[40] in the history of arbitration. The Trades Council was furious that the Arbitration Court was apparently intent upon decreasing standards in a time of increasing profits. It was 'the end of all things so far as the Court has been regarded as an instrument whereby the wages of the workers might be kept in some reasonable relation to the cost of living ...'[41] As far as the Christchurch TLC was concerned there were no arguments left in favour of the Court by the early months of 1917.

Meanwhile, the prosperity of other sectors of the community continued to increase. Each year the Bank of New Zealand announced huge increases in bank deposits and large payouts to share holders.[42] At the same time, the Director of the BNZ, Harold Beauchamp, saw fit to lecture workers for their discontent at such a state of affairs. They had 'nothing to complain of'[43] he declared. They 'must' realise wage increases were a factor in price increases and they should thus be ready to take a cut in the standard of living.[44] Labour's bitterness deepened. Workers must cease their 'opulent and extravagent mode of life',[45] Dan Sullivan wrote

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39. S 20 Feb 1917, p.3, c.1
40. Ibid., c.2
41. Ibid., c.1
42. Eg. Ibid., 26 Jun 1917, p.2, c.1
43. Ibid.
44. Ibid., 29 Jun 1918, p.6, c.1
45. Ibid., 26 Jun 1917, p.2, c.1

sardonically. Sullivan had come to believe that the economic mismanagement of the war was 'sinister'. It was

> ... no use saying that this is a sacrifice necessary to win the war. The State has no moral right to ask the poorer class of the community to make an economic sacrifice that it does not ask of the richer class.

What was needed was a 'big general all-round increase in wages in order that the pre-war balance ... shall be restored'.[46]

But the Arbitration Court did nothing to effectively maintain the parity of wages and prices during the last two years of the war. In 1919 the Government decided that in future the cost of living should automatically be taken into consideration when making awards. However, it was then too late. Many unions had turned decisively against the arbitration system. The Christchurch Trades Council reacted to the new move by declaring that it was simply the final argument in favour of the abolition of the Court. Since wages had now been fixed to slide with the cost of living, the Court 'in our opinion has no further useful service to perform, its function can equally well be carried out by the various Conciliation Commissioners ...'[47]

Some Labour leaders had come to believe that arbitration was itself at the root of labour's problems. Local figures had agreed that it helped produce the high level of apathy that paralysed so many workers, since the apathetic majority could rest on the achievements of the active minority. Compulsory Arbitration had been 'the grave of Labour's fighting spirit, the individual responsibility of its union members and its constructive thought ...' Dan Sullivan declared. He urged the labour movement to quit 'this ignoble sheltering under the law' and emerge to

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46. S 11 Sep 1917, p.3, c.1
47. T.L.C. Minutes, 26 Apr 1919

brave 'the storms of life'.[48]

However, the shift of opinion away from the Arbitration Court did not lead local labour into the radical militancy of direct action. That may have been the reaction elsewhere, but in Christchurch labour leaders remained opposed to syndicalism.[49] They turned instead to consider ways of circumventing the whole circular problem of wage increases, price increases, and the escalating cost of living. The ideas and strategies that the locals began to explore, sprang in part from their own theoretical predilections and traditions, and in part from the persuasive examples of the achievements of overseas trade unions and labour parties.

The SDP stood formally committed to the nationalisation of the means of production, distribution and exchange, but in Christchurch this was never brought forward as an election plank. The local SDP did however, emphasise schemes of municipal ownership and control, which some may have seen as a first step on the road to a more general nationalisation of industry. Robert Spiers, the party's mayoralty candidate in 1913 and 1915, declared that the SDP wanted political power on every

> governing body so as to get State and municipal ownership of all the means of life and work, so that all the means of industry might go to the great body of workers themselves .[50]

In April 1913, the SDP fought its first election in Christchurch with a programme that included a proposal for a municipal milk supply.[51] James McCombs and the other successful candidates continued to press that scheme and the others like it, over the following months. Even non-Labour City Councillors were persuaded of the worth of such ideas. The upshot was a move by the City Council in early 1914 to draft a Bill for Parliament

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48. S 23 Jan 1917, p.3, c.1
49. Eg. Ibid., 28 Sep 1915, p.12, c.1-2
50. LT 12 Apr 1915, p.4, c.6
51. T.L.C. Minutes, 24 Apr 1913

which was presented by McCombs, asking for the power to undertake schemes of municipal ownership. The House passed the bill but in so emasculated a form that the Council despaired of it as a useful measure and temporarily abandoned such projects.[52] Nevertheless, the SDP programme for the local body elections of April 1915 again contained proposals for municipal activity and trading. Plans included a scheme for a wholesale fish supply, complete with Council-owned fish market and cool store.[53]

By this time, schemes of municipal ownership had merits beyond those of conforming to a socialist-inspired programme. In a period of rapidly rising prices, they offered a practical way of cutting out middlemen and businessmen committed to profit rather than service, and of so keeping costs down. The SDP was quick to point out that its schemes would lower the cost of living.[54] Perhaps these arguments worked in the party's favour in 1915 since more of the SDP candidates were elected to the Council, but the party's representatives remained hamstrung by the lack of legislation. Then the Cost of Living Act was at first thought to give them the powers they wanted. The Government announced it had given the local bodies power to undertake trading activities, specifically as a means of reducing costs for the consumer. The SDP threw its shoulder enthusiastically to the wheel. It laid plans for the establishment of a municipal market and discussions were held with the Trades Council to thrash out the details of its organisation and structure.[55] The City Council again took up the idea of a fish market and approval was given for the purchase of a cool store.[56]

But again these projects did not even get off the ground. The

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52. James McCombs, P.D., Vol 175, p.287
53. MW 25 Mar 1915, p.5, c.5
54. Eg. Dan Sullivan, S 27 Mar 1915, p.12, c.4
55. S 9 Nov 1915, p.11, c.1-2; Ibid., 13 Nov 1915, p.12, c.1; Ibid., 20 Nov 1915, p.3, c.2
56. LT 9 Nov 1915, p.11, c.4

Government had in fact opened up no avenues. The Cost of Living Act conferred nothing that was new. It had merely made the limited powers that had been conferred specifically upon the Christchurch City Council, applicable to all local bodies. The scope of these powers was not extended. The municipality could thus establish bakeries and brickworks, for instance, but only after a poll of rate-payers had agreed to the raising of the loan finance. This was like the government getting landowners' permission before putting a tax on land, James McCombs pointed out.[57] Alternatively, local bodies could go into competition with private enterprise in the provision of such services as town milk supply. However, they could not take a monopoly and so rationalise the system - an essential part of the SDP scheme. All municipal bodies could do was to add to the already chaotic clatter of private milk vendors traversing the city streets each day.

Confronted by inadequate powers, the local SDP was frustrated in its attempts to launch any of its own schemes of municipal activity and ownership but it used to good effect the examples of successful overseas experiments.[58] Dan Sullivan regularly discussed the activities of foreign governments in controlling and keeping down the prices of food and other goods and services. Australia however, provided the example par excellance. It had the advantages of being familiar, close at hand, and under a Labor Party government. Before the conscription split, the activities of the Federal and New South Wales Governments were cited with approval. William Holman, the premier of New South Wales was rather a favourite with Christchurch labour. He had come to the city before the war and been greeted and feted as an example of the success local labour aspired to. Holman's government passed a Fair Rents Act and was working

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57. P.D., Vol 183, p.6

58. Eg. Germany S 2 Feb 1915, p.11, c.1; Britain Ibid., 21 Mar 1916, p.12 c.1-3, Holland, Ibid., 12 Sep 1916, p.3, c.2

towards the establishment of state bakeries[59] during the early months of the war. At the time, Dan Sullivan expressed uncritical approval of Holman. He was said to be like the English labour leader Ramsay MacDonald, a 'builder', not a 'revolutionary' socialist.[60] But the developing differences over conscription brought about disaffection. Holman was at first said to be 'Liberal' rather than 'Labour' in sentiment, and his ideas 'cruel';[61] by 1917, his 'geniality' was no atonement for his 'desertion'.[62]

After the conscription split, the Christchurch labour movement looked to Queensland, still under a Labor government, headed by the Premier, T.J. Ryan and the Treasurer, E.G. Theodore. The Queensland Labor Government did battle with private enterprise on a number of fronts and developed several state trading schemes during the war. The one that appealed most strongly to local labour leaders was the reorganisation of the meat supply. Meat remained a very expensive commodity in Christchurch and labour regularly blamed wholesalers for the discrepancy in prices throughout the different parts of the country.[63] In Queensland, Ryan bought up land, stocked it and opened state-owned butcher shops. Dan Sullivan claimed that this led to a drop of up to 50% in the price of meat.[64]

In contrast with the general collapse of Australian Labor, the Ryan Labor government remained popular and in power throughout the war and into the 1920s. This continuing political success was in the eyes of Christchurch Labour a vindication of his 'very considerable' state-

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59. S 4 Dec 1915, p.12, c.1; Ibid., 29 Apr 1916, p.12, c.3-4
60. Ibid., 11 May 1915, p.11, c.1-3
61. Ibid., 18 Sep 1915, p.12, c.1
62. Ibid., 10 Jul 1917, p.3, c.1
63. Eg. James McCombs, LT 18 Aug 1917, p.2, c.8
64. S 19 Sep 1916, p.3, c.3

enterprise schemes and their efficacy in bringing down the cost of living.[65]

Hampered by lack of legislation, but spurred on by continuing price rises, the Christchurch labour movement began to consider forms of collective action other than municipal and state enterprise. Trade union ownership and enterprise also appealed. Some unionists believed it a better alternative than reliance upon the political machine anyway. Political success for New Zealand labour was still a long way distant they believed,[66] even in Australia where the ALP had achieved power, it had been able to do little in the short term. The collapse of political labour in Australia by 1917 only helped reinforce the idea that labour in Christchurch should turn to the unions as the stable and enduring institutions of the labour movement. Dan Sullivan declared at one time that he believed trade union ownership preferable to state ownership.[67]

As with schemes of state enterprise, there were a number of powerful and persuasive examples of successful trade union co-operative activity to inspire Christchurch labour leaders. Dan Sullivan discussed all types of European schemes, but the successes and developments of British co-operative experiments interested him most. Sullivan believed that arbitration and direct action could both bring about wage increases, but such increases were whittled away by ever increasing prices. Co-operative trading offered a way of circumventing this whole self-perpetuating system - by short-circuiting the middlemen, it kept down prices and thus stablised the cost of living.[68]

Some of those in the labour movement believed that co-operative trading was the perfect way to 'solve Labour [sic] difficulties and

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65. S 23 Mar 1918, p.7, c.3
66. Eg. John Barlow, president of the Christchurch Furniture Workers, S 10 Jun 1916, p.12, c.1
67. Ibid., 9 Oct 1915, p.12, c.1-2
68. Ibid., 11 Jul 1916, p.3, c.1

inaugurate Socialism'.[69] Sullivan was not convinced that it was such a complete panacea, but he did believe it a useful corrective to the tendency within the labour movement towards syndicalism. Syndicalism was a misguided reaction to disillusionment with the system, Sullivan beleived, but it did contain a germ of truth. Although syndicalism, a doctrine essentially committed to 'violence and anarchic revolution',[70] Sullivan agreed that working people should have some kind of control over their trades or industries. He turned however to guild socialism.

Guild socialism was advanced by certain sectors of the British labour movement drawing inspiration from the precedents of the medieval guilds of tradesmen who had largely controlled the conditions and training within their own trades and the organisation of their own industries. Guild Socialist ideas received perhaps their greatest endorsement and widest currency during the First World War with the findings of the quasi-official Whitely Committee, set up by the British Government in October 1916 to suggest ways and means of 'securing permanent improvement in the relations between employers and workmen'.[71] The Whitely Report, published in March 1917 recommended the establishment of a new industrial structure. Management in industry was to be carried out at all levels by industrial councils, consisting of employer and employee representatives. This would do away with any need for either arbitration or direct action.

There was a vigorous debate about the worth of the Report in Britain and in Christchurch also; labour's leading figures debated the issue. Dan Sullivan was chief protagonist for the Report. He declared that it was a 'clarion call' to all governments.[72] Sullivan had earlier

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69. Christchurch North Branch, SDP, MW 22 Jul 1914, p.6, c.3
70. S 1 Aug 1916, p.3, c.1
71. J.M. Winter, op.cit., p.136
72. S 3 Nov 1917, p.9, c.1-6

been an advocate of such co-operative schemes and had endorsed similar 'visionary'[73] plans. In August 1917, he took his ideas to the Employers' Federation. He was invited to speak on the need for some 'industrial truce' between Capital and Labour which would enable the British Empire to survive the 'fierce International Conflict after the war'.[74] Sullivan used the occasion to argue for the setting up of workshop committees and national councils to govern industry in the matter of 'wages, technical education etc, etc'[75] precisely along the lines recommended by the Whitely Report. For some months in 1918, Sullivan and other leading unionists, including Ernest Langley of the Lyttelton Waterside Workers, pursued the ideas. Langley even wrote to British leaders who had signed the Whitely Report for further explanations and recommendations.[76] Then quite suddenly, Sullivan and the others laid aside their schemes.

Not all local labour leaders had been so uniformly delighted with the plans. Some had been deeply suspicious of such a formal co-operative partnership, fearing a betrayal of the unions to employers. Ted Howard had publicly argued against the proposals that Sullivan put forward in his address to the employers. Howard agreed on the need for 'tolerance' between Capital and Labour and further agreed that some new machinery to bring workers 'closer' to employers could be advantageous. However, it must be done without trenching on the trade unions - the workers must not be outflanked.[77] Dan Sullivan was never anxious to create division within the labour movement and he did not want to split it over this issue.[78] Furthermore, the British labour movement itself turned against the Whitely proposals. Even the labour men who had signed the Report

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73. S 7 Jul 1917, p.12, c.1
74. T.L.C. Minutes, 18 Aug 1917
75. Ibid.
76. S 23 Feb 1918, p.7, c.1-2
77. Ibid., 4 Sep 1917, p.3, c.1-2
78. Ibid., 3 Nov 1917, p.9, c.1-6

and to whom Langley had appealled, wrote back expressing their full misgivings.[79] In early 1919 the National Guild's League in Britain condemned the Whitely proposals.[80] This was the coup de grace. Sullivan did not further explore guild socialist ideas in the year before the 1919 general election.

But on the practical rather than the theoretical level, co-operative trading did get some small start in Christchurch during the First World War. Local unions had contemplated schemes for establishing their own businesses for some years. In 1913 workers were at first so incensed when barbers raised their charges from 6d to 9d that they vowed to establish their own hairdressing salon.[81] Certain unions were more enthusiastic about co-operative trading than others. The Furniture Workers, of which Dan Sullivan was secretary were always well to the fore, perhaps under his influence. A Co-operative Society was active canvassing the unions by the beginning of 1918[82] and finally launched a co-operative store in August 1918. The Trades and Labour Council urged all workers to patronise it.[83] Some unions, the Furniture Workers among them, bought shares in the venture.[84]

The Furniture Workers were among the most conservative of all unions in Christchurch but the rise in the cost of living was an issue that rapidly radicalised the whole industrial labour movement. The Railway Workers were another example. They were considered to be extremely conservative; even Dan Sullivan had declared that their history proved them to be a 'decided weakness' in the movement. There had been little contact with the more politically oriented TLC in the immediate

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79. Eg. Robert Smillie, S 30 Mar 1918, p.7, c.4-5
80. Ibid., 15 Feb 1919, p.5, c.1-2
81. MW 17 Jan 1913, p.5, c.5
82. Christchurch Tramway Workers' Union Minutes, 29 Apr 1918
83. T.L.C. Minutes, 3 Aug 1918
84. Christchurch Furniture Workers' Union Minutes, 16 Jul 1918

pre-war era. However, the rising cost of living brought about some rapprochement. A railwaymen's deputation approached the TLC for joint action in the organisation of some kind of demonstration to make the government take note of the workers' discontent. The TLC was delighted with the initiative; it was 'one of the most encouraging signs of the time', and the Council hoped it would be the forerunner of more substantial co-operation.[85]

However, even the projected demonstration did not materialise. The railwaymen, one of the union groups most decidely enthusiastic about the war, were almost certainly scared off by the TLC's increasing involvement with the conscription-repeal campaign of April 1917.

Labour's platform in these local body elections did not formally contain a plank on the cost of living. But it did contain one on war profits, and through this, candidates spent much of their electioneering energy discussing the cost of living. Dan Sullivan declared that the whole programme indeed, was designed to 'give the tip'[86] to the government on the need for action. James McCombs, who led the labour campaign, declared that he wanted voters to view the whole exercise as a means of driving home to the government their dissatisfaction about the cost of living.[87]

All labour candidates argued it was unjust that men should fight and die on the field of battle for a pittance. Widows and orphans should not be left in economic distress while capitalists and farmers waxed fat on war profits. Labour wanted the redirection of war profits into the pockets of the men at the front and their needy dependents at home. Generally, the bulk of the Christchurch labour movement was not in favour of the outright conscription of wealth. That was more characteristic of

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85. T.L.C. Minutes, 17 Feb 1917
86. S 27 Feb 1917, p.2, c.2
87. LT 12 Apr 1917, p.7, c.5

the extreme anti-war and pro-war factions. Ada Wells, the ardent pacifist and anti-militarist wanted the conscription of all wealth above a certain figure because she believed that would have been a democratic and hence anti-militaristic way of waging war.[88] Ernest Langley, among those most enthusiastic about the war, wanted the same measure for the opposite reasons - as part of an all-out effort to win the war. Conscription of 'everything essential to victory'[89] he declared.

On the other hand, some of the most influential labour leaders in Christchurch disavowed the argument for the conscription of wealth altogether. Ted Howard declared that although many people 'generally understood that the Labour movement stood for the conscription of wealth ... he had not done so.'[90]

Labour's critique of war profits was intimately tied to its attitude on conscription. Labour men and women had come together to oppose conscription for a variety of reasons, but everyone was at least agreed that economic justice should be done to the soldiers and their dependents. In submitting to conscription, labour argued that the people lost all power of ensuring that this would occurr:[91] While there was voluntary enlistment, the Government would have to ensure rates of pay and pensions were sufficient to encourage men to continue to enlist.

Labour beleived that the numbers of volunteers would never have tailed off in the first instance if the government had taken action on the cost of living and had been prepared to ensure equality of sacrifice. Instead it had allowed some to profit while others fought, died and suffered economic privation.

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88. T.L.C. Press cutting book, 14 Jun 1917
89. S 5 May 1917, p.12, c.1
90. T.L.C. Press cutting book, 14 Jun 1917
91. Eg. LT 29 Jan 1916, p.11, c.6. UFL Manifesto

For labour, the parallels that it drew between conscription, rates of pay for soldiers, and the need for action on the cost of living, had important results. Up until the time of the conscription-repeal campaign of April 1917, labour was only one of a chorus of voices in Christchurch protesting about the increasing cost of living. The conscription-repeal campaign polarised Christchurch. Labour's enemies, who declared that the call against conscription was disloyal, treasonous, or 'aiding and abetting the enemy',[92] hastened to put as much distance as possible between themselves and labour candidates. Conservatives were not willing to risk the taint of disloyalty by any kind of association. In the surfeit of their patriotic zeal, they back-tracked from everything that labour was involved in - including both the demand for action on the cost of living and the demand for the more generous provision for soldiers. Labour was left a lone pennant in these campaigns. It was able to seize the initiative and make the issues its own in a way that had not earlier been possible.

Agitation about the cost of living had at first been very widely based in Christchurch. Local Liberal MPs may have been compromised by the inaction of their own Liberal ministers in the coalition, but they were not muzzled. They had continued to criticise the government. Leonard Isitt made proposals for commandeering the whole of the wheat crop in order to keep down the price of bread.[93] Harry Ell railed against the government for allowing the 'utterly selfish and unpatriotic' dairy farmers to continue to rake in huge profits while soldiers died.[94] George Witty, the member for Riccarton, was so disgusted with his party and its leader that at one point he repudiated them both, declaring that the Liberals were 'as dead as Julius Ceasar' and quite without a Parliamentary

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92. Eg. T.L.C. Press cutting book
93. LT 19 Dec 1916, p.7, c.1
94. Ibid., 28 Aug 1916, p.5, c.4

leader. He urged the people to agitate in 'every possible way' against the government in order to get action on the cost of living.[95] With the exception of George Russell, the member for Avon, who had become a Minister in the coalition, all the local Liberals took part in protests and demonstrations about the cost of living until the early months of 1917.

This stand had won them considerable popular acclaim. Even within the industrial labour movement they had a following. When the Trades Council was pressed into organising a public protest meeting on the cost of living local labour leaders were asked to speak. However the union that had initiated the idea was disappointed. It had wanted the local Liberals on the stage. Ted Howard was furious. He accused the union of allowing itself to be used by 'an outside party' and in exasperation 'prophecied that the meeting would be a failure'.[96]

After Labour's conscription-repeal campaign of March-April 1917, almost all non-labour politicians opted out of the cost-of-living agitation. Their revulsion of feeling is well illustrated by events in the City Council. In the closing months of 1916, Liberals Henry Thacker and George Witty had been at the forefront of the local agitation. They had been continually in the public eye and in December 1916 led a deputation to the City Council to press for some united move by all parties in an approach to the government for action on soldiers' pensions and rising prices. There was unanimous, sympathetic reaction by councillors. The non-labour mayor, Henry Holland, declared that there could 'hardly be two opinions'[97] about the issue. A special subcommittee was set up to draft protest resolutions to be sent on to the government. Holland was chairman, Harry Ell and Sullivan two of the subcommittee members.[98]

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95. LT 10 Mar 1916, p.4, c.4
96. T.L.C. Minutes, 21 Jul 1917
97. LT 21 Dec 1916, p.7, c.3
98. S 14 Jun 1917, T.L.C Press cutting book, c.2

Several months went by before the resolutions came up for endorsement by the whole City Council. But by this time the local body elections had taken place and the polarisation between the labour and non-labour politicians was then so great that all the non-labour councillors repudiated the resolutions as tainted with anti-war sentiment. Holland declared that he had been re-elected

> purely on the conscription v. anti-conscription issue [sic] ... Since the resolutions were first drafted the circumstances had changed. He did not think the Council Chamber should be used for the purpose of anti-militarist propaganda.[99]

Other non-labour councillors agreed; they were determined not to be made 'a stalking-horse for anti-militarism'.[100] There was, they now declared, 'nothing more or less underlying the whole think but anti-conscription and harassing the Government'.[101] Some conservatives went further. Not only were they anxious themselves to avoid any accusation of disloyalty, but they argued against freedom of speech for anybody:

> No man was entitled to publicly express an opinion in a way that would make the work of Parliament more difficult than it was. Even at a public meeting they had no right to ventilate these views.[102]

Obvious injustices were apparently to be acquiesced in if they could be justified in the name of the war effort.

Conservatives had over reached themselves in adopting this stance. They left labour in control of what was in fact a very moderate and potentially loyalist position. The contentious resolutions that the non-labour politicians in the City Council had refused to endorse had merely called upon the government to 'fearlessly and promptly' tax wealth

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99. S 14 Jun 1917, T.L.C. Press cutting book, c.2
100. Ibid., c.3
101. Ibid., c.2
102. Ibid., 17 Jun 1917, T.L.C. Press cutting book

in order to give pensions to soldiers as of right, and allow higher rates of pay to them and their dependents.[103] Few could justifiably deny the integrity of the argument that the men who did the fighting and dying should at least be treated generously. Nor was it much more defensible to argue against the use of war profits for such an end. The very degree of unanimity that had previously existed on the issue demonstrated that. Yet after April 1917, labour alone was left in Christchurch to uphold the principle.

The cost of living continued to rise during the last two years of the war. Real wages reached their lowest point at the end of 1918. Labour's attitude hardened. Whereas in 1916 Sullivan for instance had praised those who invested 'silver bullets'[104] in the war loans, by the middle of 1917 he criticised the fact that those capitalists made profits not even subject to income tax.[105] He and other labour leaders began to argue for the financing of the war from taxation, not borrowing. The government's budgets were criticised for taxing those items that hit hardest at the working people 'further penalising those who were paying most'.[106]

In spite of the fact that the official figures showed a worsening position for workers during the last months of the war, as wages fell further behind prices, in Christchurch discontent simmered rather than erupted. It may have been that the patriotism of the people led them to exercise restraint and prevented any gathering of momentum in the agitation on the cost of living. Some of the protest meetings organised by the Labour Party during this period were only 'moderately' attended. But it may also have been that the official figures painted a picture blacker than reality. Some unions admitted behind the scenes that their members

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103. S 17 Jun 1917, T.L.C Press cutting book
104. Ibid., 22 Aug 1916, p.3, c.3
105. Ibid., 4 Aug 1917, p.12, c.1; Ibid., 28 Aug 1917, p.3, c.1-2
106. Ibid., 4 Aug 1917, p.12, c.1

were in fact doing rather well. Even Ted Howard, who dealt with unskilled labourers, usually the first to suffer when times were hard, declared that 1918 was the best year he had known 'from the point of view of the worker'.[107] The drain of men to the front had produced a scarcity of labour that forced wages up considerably in excess of award rates.

But even if this was true, it did not last beyond the end of war. As returned servicemen flooded back into the country there was a labour glut. Unemployment began to climb. Only months after the end of hostilities, the secretary of the Canterbury Branch of the Returned Servicemen's Association reported that well over a hundred of his members were tramping the city streets each day, looking for work.[108] At the same time, official figures paradoxically now presented a deceptively rosy picture. Once amendments were made to the Arbitration Act so that awards were automatically made to slide with the cost of living, real wages began to rise. By the end of 1919 they had reached pre-war levels. However, that was little comfort to the growing numbers who could get no work at all.

Unemployment, the continuing rise of prices and lack of restraint now that the war was actually won, combined to make the cost of living the issue of 1919. Labour gave it top priority in its political campaigns that year. The municipal elections took place in April, only a few months after the signing of the Armistice. Labour put forward a large number of candidates, including Ada Wells and Sarah Page, both well-known anti-militarists, and three men who had been imprisoned for sedition. But in spite of this, party emphasis was firmly on unity. All contentious issues were laid aside. Fred Cooke and Tim Armstrong, two of

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107. LT 30 Dec 1918, p.8, c.3

108. Barry Gustafson, op.cit., p.182

the men gaoled for sedition, took the platform with Ernest Langley, the 'full conscription' advocate on several occasions. They were present when he told voters that Labour intended to concentrate upon municipal improvement, 'outside subjects would be tabooed .... The contentious anti-conscription plank at last election had robbed Labour of a majority in the last Council, but that plank was past and gone ....'[109]

Instead, everyone turned their attention to the cost of living, presenting a programme of the 'familiar socialist type'[110] emphasising the protection of consumer and rate-payer interests and urging a number of schemes of municipal enterprise and trading. One new idea was for a municipal coal depot, actually inaugurated by Labour councillors a few months later but rapidly frustrated by conservatives. However, the idea was a good one since the price of fuel was very high in Christchurch compared to the other main centres. The scheme may have owed something to Tim Armstrong, an ex-miner active in Christchurch municipal politics for the first time, although he had been successful in local body politics elsewhere before the war.[111]

All Labour candidates argued that the municipal schemes would hold down the cost of living, but some pushed the argument further. The three adamant and perhaps eccentric anti-militarist candidates of St. Albans - Ada Wells, Sarah Page and the Rev. G.H.J. Chapple - added their own dimension. They declared that if the government saw fit to adopt the 'German militarist system' in respect of conscription, it should go the whole distance and undertake the German schemes of municipal enterprise, including municipal ownership of land and housing.[112]

Housing was an issue that had become especially important at the

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109. LT 15 Apr 1919, p.4, c.8
110. Ibid., Editorial, 16 Apr 1919, p.6, c.2
111. See Bernard Kendrick, op.cit., p.72-4
112. LT 17 Apr 1919, p.6, c.4

end of the war. The influenza epidemic of late 1918 had shown up the fact that many of the city's homes were substandard, 'not fit for pigs to dwell in' declared Ted Howard.[113] Labour painted an attractive alternative to be achieved through new housing schemes. Ada Wells envisaged 'beautiful suburbs on town planning lines',[114] all run by the City Council. Ada Wells and Sarah Page elaborated further than other Labour candidates, the details of life under such a new local body regime. As women attuned to the traditional roles, domestic affairs interested them perhaps more than the men. They wanted municipal baths in every suburb, along with generous provision of creches and playgrounds. They furthermore wanted municipal laundries and kitchens; they even proposed a system of producing 'municipal dinners'. Such things 'could be, and would be done when the Labour Party got into power' promised Ada Wells.[115] But most had more limited vision. George Manning's prosaic promise of 'cheaper food and probably bricks'[116] was typical.

Although the Labour Party claimed to be heartened by the election result the response of voters had in fact been uneven. Labour's overall representation on the Council increased by one, but two sitting councillors, Ada Wells and Ted Howard were not re-elected. As in 1915, the elections were held under a ward system and Labour's main support came from the traditional working class areas, especially Linwood, where Henry Herbert came in just ahead of Sullivan and considerably ahead of Hiram Hunter. However, the city voted as one for Mayor, and here Labour made a poor showing. McCombs came last of three candidates, receiving a low response even in working class booths where other Labour candidates polled well. Workers 'did not support him loyally in the contest'.[117]

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113. LT 7 Mar 1919, p.5, c.1
114. Ibid., 17 Apr 1919, p.6, c.3
115. Ibid.
116. Ibid., 29 Apr 1919, p.8, c.3-4
117. Ibid., 1 May 1919, p.7, c.3-4

McCombs had had a difficult task in opposing Henry Thacker, the Liberal MP for Christchurch East. Thacker's record during the war made him a tricky opponent for any Labour man. In Parliament Thacker had consistently sided with the Labour group in demanding action on the cost of living, voting on occasion against the majority of his own Liberal Party. McCombs was therefore not able to point the finger and make him share in the general odium that was coming to be heaped on the heads of many Liberals. Furthermore, local elections tended to revolve around local affairs, McCombs had barely interested himself in city issues during the second half of the war. Between the 1917 and 1918 Parliamentary sessions for instance he had spent only one day in the city.[118]

National issues like conscription and prohibition pre-empted his attention. Even his business had collapsed in his absence. Thacker, on the other hand had strong parochial interests. He stood for election as a Port Christchurch rather than a Liberal candidate, promising to proceed with the excavation of a deep sea port at the mouth of the Heathcote River. This measure, he declared, would make the city a commercial metropolis to rival any in the southern hemisphere.[119]

Parochialism did not play the same part in the general election campaigns eight months later. Labour was then able to hammer away at the Liberals as part of a national organisation and the records of the leaders of the party gave Labour excellent ammunition. The coalition government had disbanded in August 1919, after Ward's resignation. As a ministry, the coalition had become thoroughly discredited. Even churchmen viewed its end with satisfaction and believed that the majority of the people would be unmoved 'by the spectacle of the disillusion of the National Ministry, an administration distinguished by no

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118. LT 28 Mar 1918, p.9, c.4-5
119. Ibid.

special virtues but which stood for compromise in all important questions ... and for the most part was content to carry on.'[120]

Once the Liberals had left the government, Reform took steps to tighten up price controls by strengthening the Board of Trade. The Liberals, again the opposition, thus missed out on any resurgence of popularity that the move may have produced. Instead they were saddled with their record of war-time inaction. Reform never had a strong hold in Christchurch however, and although the Press was an at times violently enthusiastic protagonist of that party, Reform candidates nevertheless usually got few votes. When the Prime Minister, Bill Massey, came to Christchurch towards the end of 1919, his meeting broke up in riot after the door was rammed and smashed by a waiting crowd outside the hall. Although many of the city's citizens were horrified that such unseemly behaviour should discredit the city, it was not a symptom of serious alienation from the government. Rather, it was as though 'one had ordered 200 dinners at a restaurant and suddenly sent 2,000 people there to be fed' said Henry Thacker, who had chaired the meeting.[121] The Liberal Party remained Labour's real opponent in Christchurch during 1919.

Labour put up seven Parliamentary candidates. Four of the seats were wholly or predominantly urban, three contained sizeable rural blocks and one, Kaiapoi, was a farming electorate, broken only by a few country towns. The Labour candidate was C. Morgan Williams, an unusual political amalgam of a small farmer interested in socialism and anti-militarism.[122] Williams had taken a leading part in the agitation against military training before the war, working closely with the National Peace Council to organise

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120. Outlook 26 Aug 1919, p.3, c.1

121. LT 5 Dec 1919, p.7, c.6-8

122. Barry Gustafson, op.cit., p.181, implies that the nomination of Williams was evidence of a new interest in rural affairs by Labour in 1919. In fact, the association of Williams with the Labour movement dated from at least 1913.

a campaign of the rural areas. He did not take a prominent role in Labour's campaign against conscription during the war, but in 1919 he again declared his 'uncompromising attitude of hostility towards the spirit of militarism ...'[123] Such pronouncements gave him some problems during the general election campaigns.[124]

Riccarton was a largely rural Christchurch seat, although it also included some of the most affluent inner city suburbs of Fendalton and the Borough of Riccarton itself. Labour put up John Robertson, who had represented Otaki as a Socialist Party MP before the war. He seems to have been a last minute choice in Christchurch, there was initially more enthusiasm for J.K. Archer, a congregationalist minister.[125] However, Archer contested an Invercargill seat and did not establish himself in Christchurch until after the elections.

Christchurch North, abutting both Kaiapoi and Riccarton electorates, was almost completely urban. However, it was also one of the most conservative seats in Christchurch since it covered the affluent areas of the inner city north of the Square. Tim Armstrong stood for Labour against the sitting Liberal Leonard Isitt, who had by then represented the electorate for nearly a decade.

In these three electorates, Kaiapoi, Riccarton and Christchurch North, Labour had only a small chance of winning. Voters were preponderantly members of either the upper class or farming communities. It may not have been coincidence that in these seats the party put up candidates new and untested on the political scene of Christchurch. In the established working class electorates, Labour's candidates were well-known. Hiram Hunter stood in Christchurch East for the third time. Ted Howard stood in Christchurch South, the first time he had contested a

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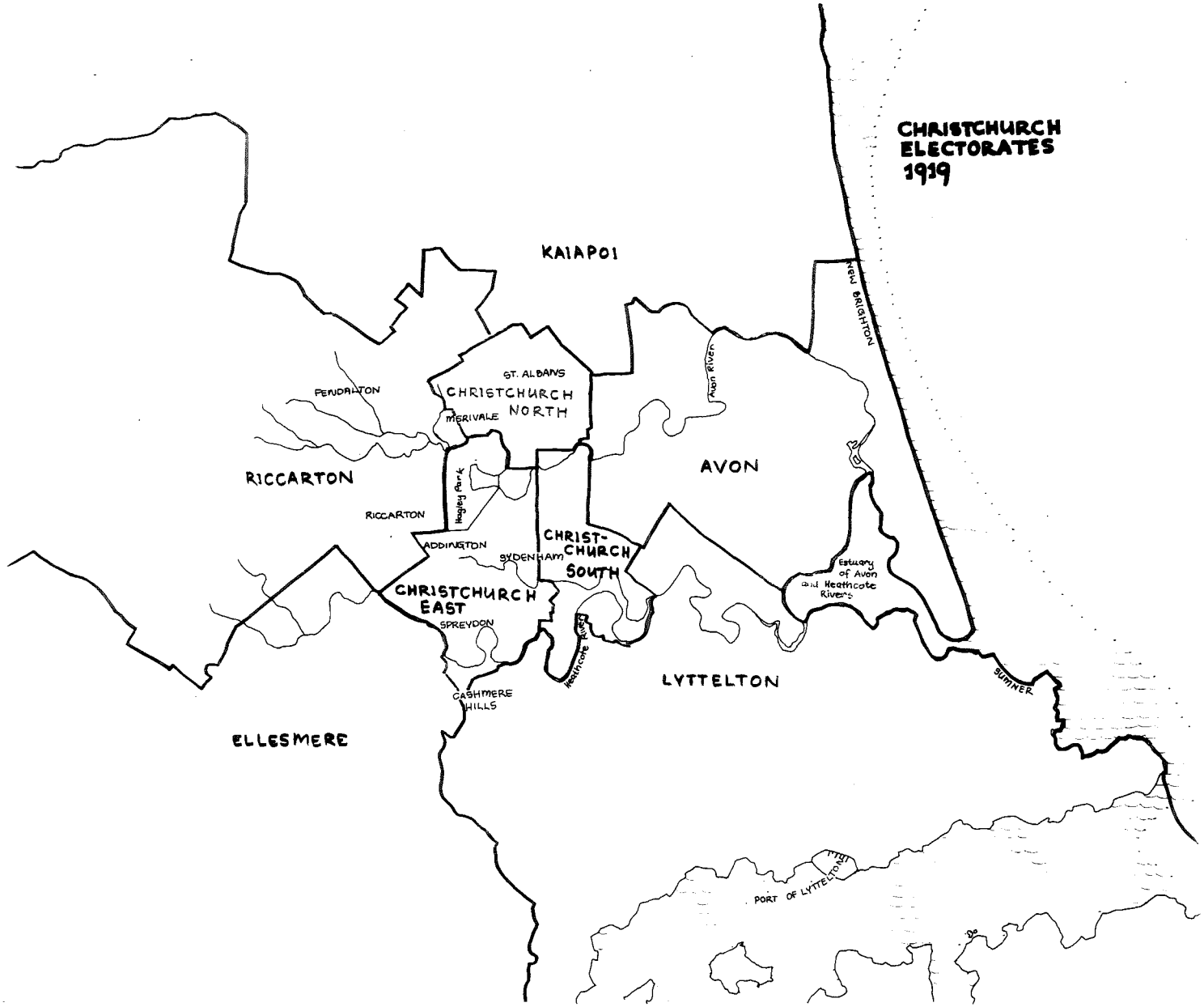
123. LT 20 Oct 1919, p.7, c.2

124. Eg. Editorial Ibid., 4 Dec 1919, p.6, c.3

125. 'All branches of the Labour Party in Riccarton electorate have nominated Rev. J.K. Archer ....' Ibid., 1 Jul 1919, p.6, c.4


CHRISTCHURCH ELECTORATES 1919
KAIAPOI
NEW BRIGHTON
ST. ALBANS
CHRISTCHURCH NORTH
PEGNALTON
MERIVALE
Avon River
AVON
RICCARTON
Hagley Park
RICCARTON
ADDINGTON
SYDENHAM
CHRIST-CHURCH SOUTH
Estuary of Avon and Heathcote Rivers
CHRISTCHURCH EAST
SPREYDON
Heathcote River
LYTTELTON
SUMNER
CASHMERE HILLS
ELLESMERE
PORT OF LYTTELTON

Parliamentary seat since 1911. McCombs remained strong in Lyttelton, where he had already survived two election campaigns by 1919.

In each electorate, the key issue was the rise in the cost of living and the Liberals' culpability for it. Labour candidates succeeded most where they could make their opponents bear a full share of the scorn that they heaped on the Liberal Party. Sullivan had the easiest task.

George Russell had declared that he was going to make the campaign turn upon conscription, but he could not evade the issue of the management of the economy during the war. Sullivan's tactic of inssiting that opposition to conscription was only the reverse side of his record of work to assist servicemen forced Russell to face up to the charges about the rise in the cost of living. Sullivan forged an alliance with returned servicemen. Russell on the other hand had nothing but his record as a minister in the government that decided upon the very rates of pay and pensions that were at the heart of much of the discontent.

By 1919 George Russell was fast becoming a discredited figure. As the Minister of Health at the time of the influenza epidemic he bore the brunt of the blame for its outbreak and was continually forced to defend his actions during his campaign in Avon. Moreover, as deputy leader of the Liberal party, he was closely associated with Ward, and the Liberal record of war-time financial management. Many of his campaign meetings were a farce. Audiences were in continual uproar and it was common for votes of no-confidence to be presented. Even Labour supporters finally appealed for him to be given a fair hearing.[126] Russell unwisely made his position even more difficult by challenging Sullivan on the record of the Labor Government in Queensland. Ryan had there made 'such a hash of things'[127] declared Russell, that the situation

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126. Eg. LT 21 Nov 1919, p.7, c.6-7; Ibid., 24 Nov 1919, p.8, c.5
127. Ibid., 21 Nov 1919, p.7, c.6

was much worse than in New Zealand. This played right into Sullivan's hand. He was able to demonstrate that Russell was wrong since the accusations were based on incorrect material, and all the while drawing invidious comparisons between the dismal Liberal record of inaction[128] and Labour's demands.

Like Sullivan, McCombs in Lyttelton had something of an advantage in facing opposition that was at least partially already discredited. Harry Ell had transferred from his seat of Christchurch South to contest Lyttelton in spite of the fact that another Liberal had been nominated. This split McCombs's opposition. Ell had persisted in his move because he was becoming obsessed with the development of the Port Hills, part of the Lyttelton electorate, as a scenic reserve. The obsession took an ever closer hold upon his mind. During the twenties and thirties it led to eccentricity and financial ruin.[129]

Harry Ell had not been a minister in the coalition and McCombs could not therefore implicate him in the same way that Sullivan was able to implicate Russell. However McCombs continued to hammer the Liberal record. He described Ward's Cost of Living Act as the 'greatest piece of hypocrisy ever foisted upon the people ...'[130] Like Sullivan, McCombs was able to turn the Labour stance on conscription to his own advantage. If the government had done as Labour demanded and used war profits for the more generous provision of soldiers and their dependents, war widows would not now be receiving less than influenza widows, he pointed out. If Ward had used taxation, not borrowing for the war effort, working people would not, in 1919, be discovering that :

having fought the war they were privileged to pay the taxes and

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128. Eg. LT 24 Nov 1919, p.2, c.8
129. Gordon Ogilvie, op.cit., p.211-225
130. LT 18 Nov 1919, p.7, c.7

> help earn the interest on the money filched from their dependents while they were away at the front .[131]

The crowd roared its approval.

In Christchurch South, Ted Howard faced a rather different political dilemma. Neither he nor his opponent were tried and tested MPs with a Parliamentary record to praise or blame. Henry Holland stood as an Independent Liberal. Howard's energies could thus not be directed wholly at discrediting the big fish of the Liberal Party and hoping at the same time to catch his opponent in the net as one of the small fry. Howard did scorn the record of both Liberal and Reform. The opportunity was too good to miss. He ridiculed at length that only offspring of the coalition, an 'awfully ugly child',[132] the profiteer. Henry Holland tried to discredit Howard as a member of a party which had committed the 'most heinous'[133] crime of sedition. But Howard was careful to point out that his personal record was one of integrity.[134] More than in other Christchurch electorates, the contest in Christchurch South was perhaps dominated by personality rather than party. Both men had built up local followings. Henry Holland had been a successful and popular mayor of Christchurch for a number of years but this was not a match to the campaign that Howard was able to mount. Ted Howard had by 1919 established a strong power base for himself in Christchurch. His work on the Repatriation Board more than answered any accusations of hampering the war effort.[135] At the same time Howard took up the issue of housing. After the influenza epidemic, Howard spent much time stumping around the city and the outlying areas giving illustrated lantern lectures on town planning and housing problems.[136] He was building up a personal record that was hard for any

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131. LT 18 Nov 1919, p.7, c.7
132. Ibid., 7 Nov 1919, p.7, c.7
133. Ibid., 11 Dec 1919, p.7, c.6
134. Ibid., 16 Dec 1919, p.12, c.2
135. Eg. Ibid.
136. Eg. Ibid., 21 Jun 1919, p.1, c.6; Ibid., 16 Dec 1919, p.8, c.5

opponent to match.

Henry Holland may have been popular in local politics but his stance in Parliamentary politics was uncertain. As an Independent Liberal, Holland was critical of many of Ward's actions, yet paradoxically he was committed to follow Ward's lead in Parliament.[137] It reduced to a rather mealy-mouthed position. On the other hand, many of his positive policies were similar to Labour demands and he had to answer accusations that he had cribbed Labour's ideas. For instance he put forward the same policy on pensions for soldiers. 'You're a Bolshevik'[138] laughed his audience. Essentially Holland was caught between two political stools and his campaign did not make the same impact as Howard's.

Christchurch East was one of the most distinctively working class electorates of Christchurch, but the sitting Member of Parliament, Henry Thacker,was able to pre-empt the support of working people in 1919. Hiram Hunter, as the official Labour candidate based his campaign on the government record on the cost of living. His publicity slogans give the tone of his campaign: 'Humanity versus the Profiteer', 'The only way to record your protest against profiteering is to vote Labour'.[139] However, as an attack on Thacker these shots fell short of the mark. Just as in the debate about pensions and conditions for servicemen and their dependents, Thacker was effectively able to outmanoeuvre Labour. He could point to a consistent record of opposition to government inaction on the cost of living. Further, he distanced himself from the Liberal Party. He had attended only one coalition caucus meeting and had voted against the extension of the Parliamentary life that the ministry had awarded itself. Thacker's policies were in many respects very similar to

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137. LT 16 Dec 1919, p.8, c.7

138. Ibid.

139. Eg. LT 27 Nov 1919, p.2, c.8; Ibid., 28 Nov 1919, p.2, c.8

those of Labour. Some critics believed he had 'pinched' them.[140] However, his wartime record in Parliament was more than sufficient to ensure his continued popularity in 1919 and he beat Hunter by a convincing margin.

Economics were the key to Labour's political success in Christchurch in 1919. The cost of living agitation offered Labour a means of demonstrating the integrity of its own position, and at the same time discrediting its opponents. Candidates had found a vote winning formula. The long parliamentary apprenticeship could begin.

However, not everyone within the Labour Party was content with merely finding the key to political success. They believed that Labour had a mission above that of achieving political power. The attitude was crystallised at the Annual Conference of the Labour Party in July months before the general elections. J.T. Paul, Party President declared that securing the election of members of Parliament was the 'principal work of the Party, ... always, of course, with due regard to principle.' However, Harry Holland saw further. Achieving power should only be a part of Labour's 'immediate work'. The ultimate aim was not to find a policy which matched the desires and the consciousness of the people. Labour had not to find the level of the people, rather it had to raise the people to the level of Labour. Workers had to be moulded to 'intelligently take over the Government of the country'.[141] This lay not in the realm of brief political campaigns, but in the long, slow haul of education.

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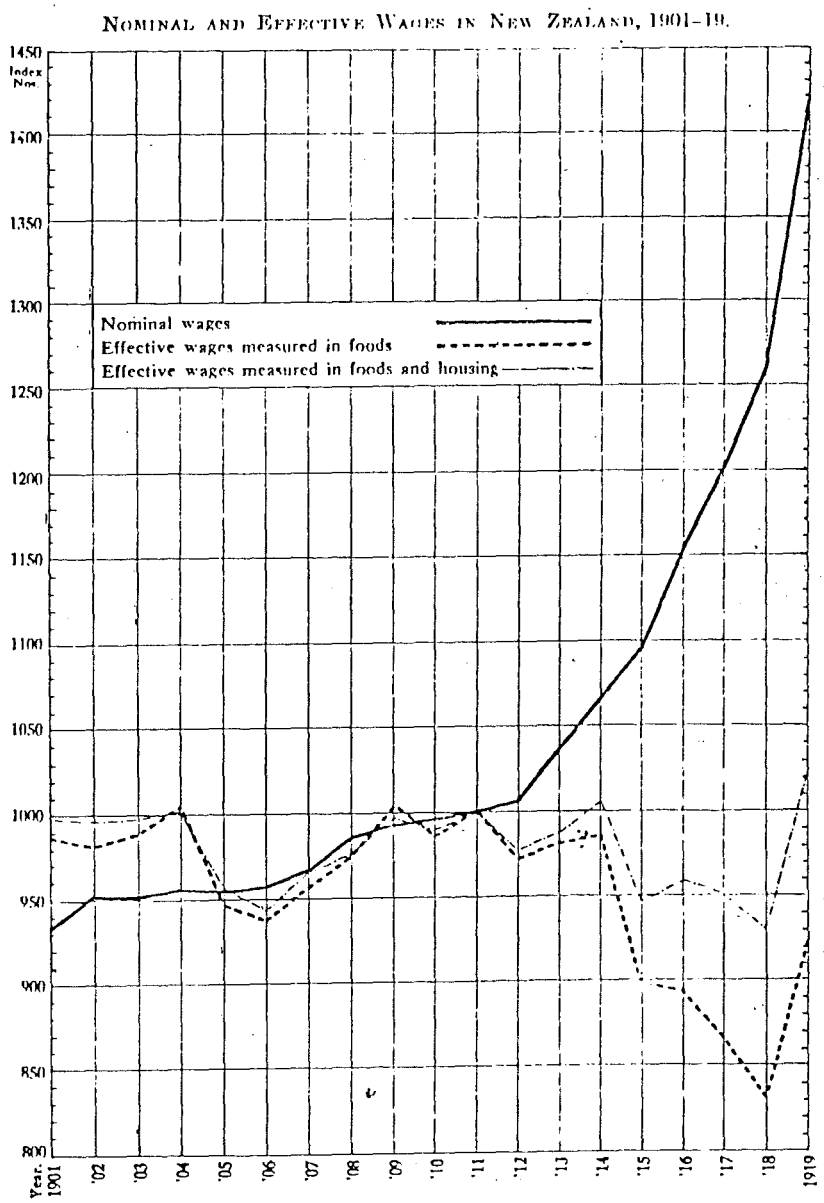
140. P 19 Nov 1919, p.10, c.6
141. MW 24 Jul 1918, p.5, c.3

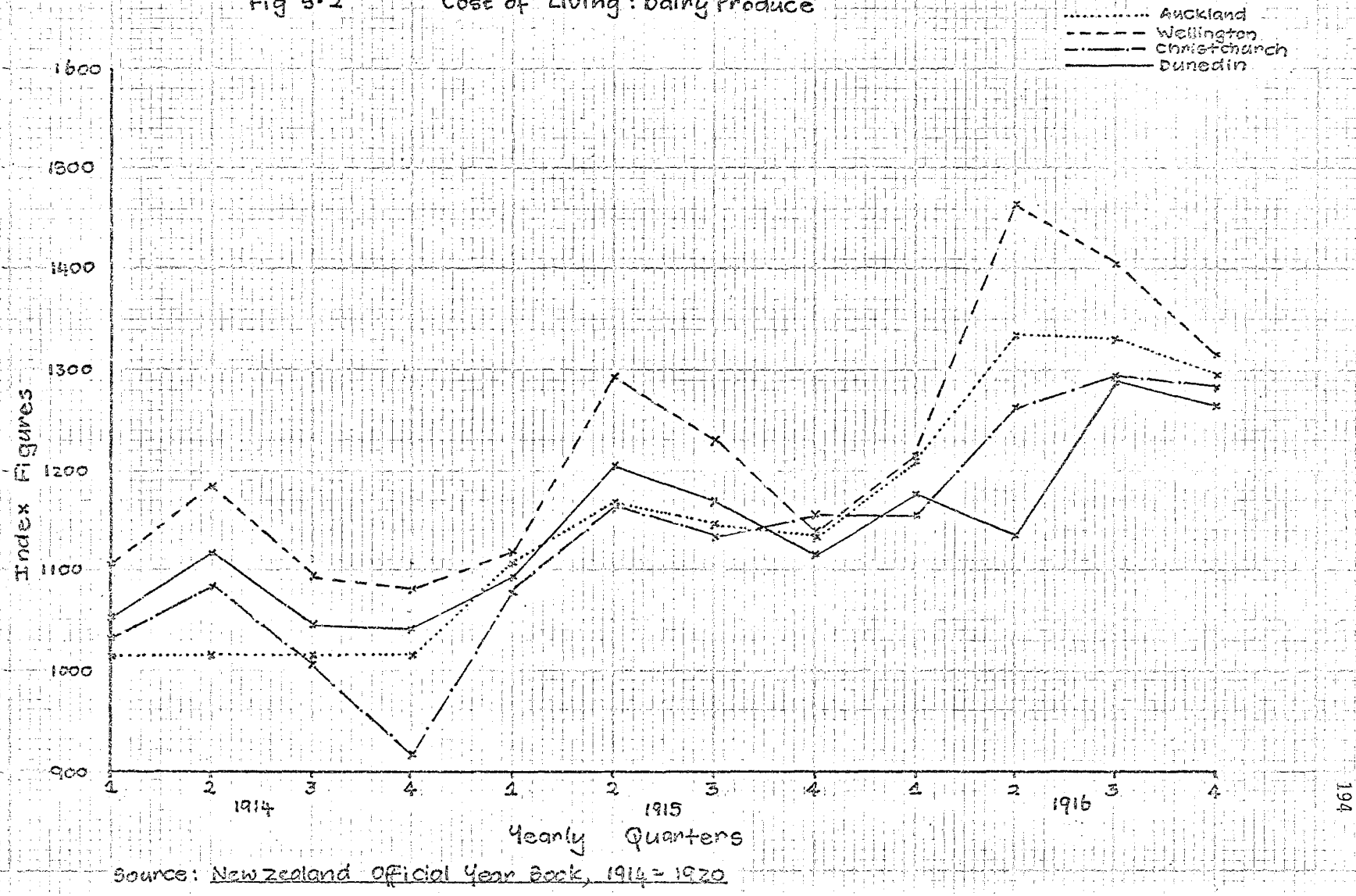
Fig 5.1

GRAPHIC DIAGRAM SHOWING MOVEMENT OF NOMINAL AND EFFECTIVE WAGES, 1901 19.



Source: G.W. Clinkard, 'Wages and Working Hours in New Zealand 1877-1919'. New Zealand Official Year Book, 1919. p.933

Fig 5·2 Cost of Living : Dairy Produce



Source: New Zealand Official Year Book, 1914 - 1920

Fig 5·2 Cost of Living : Dairy Produce

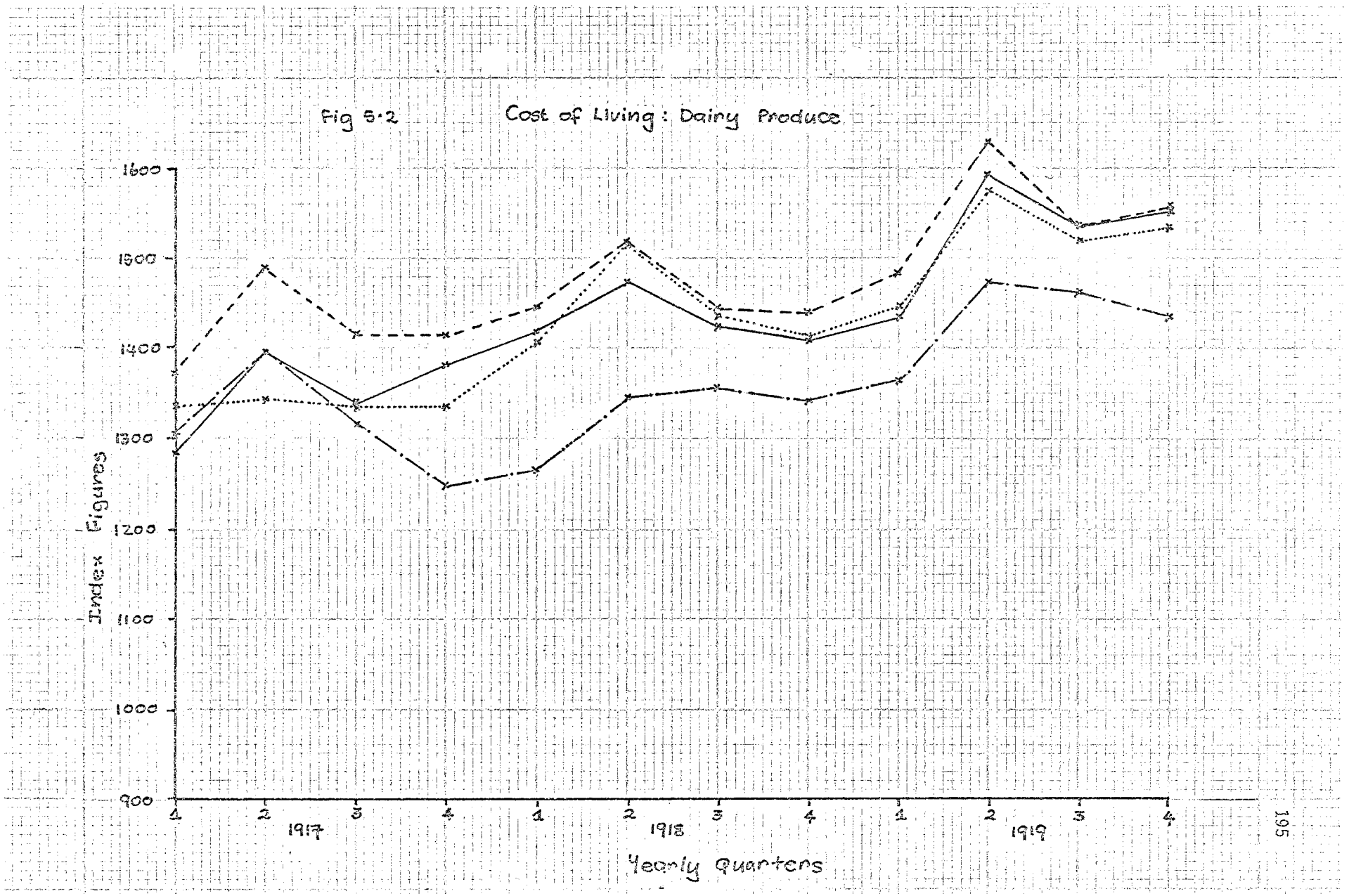


Fig 5·3 Cost of Living: Groceries

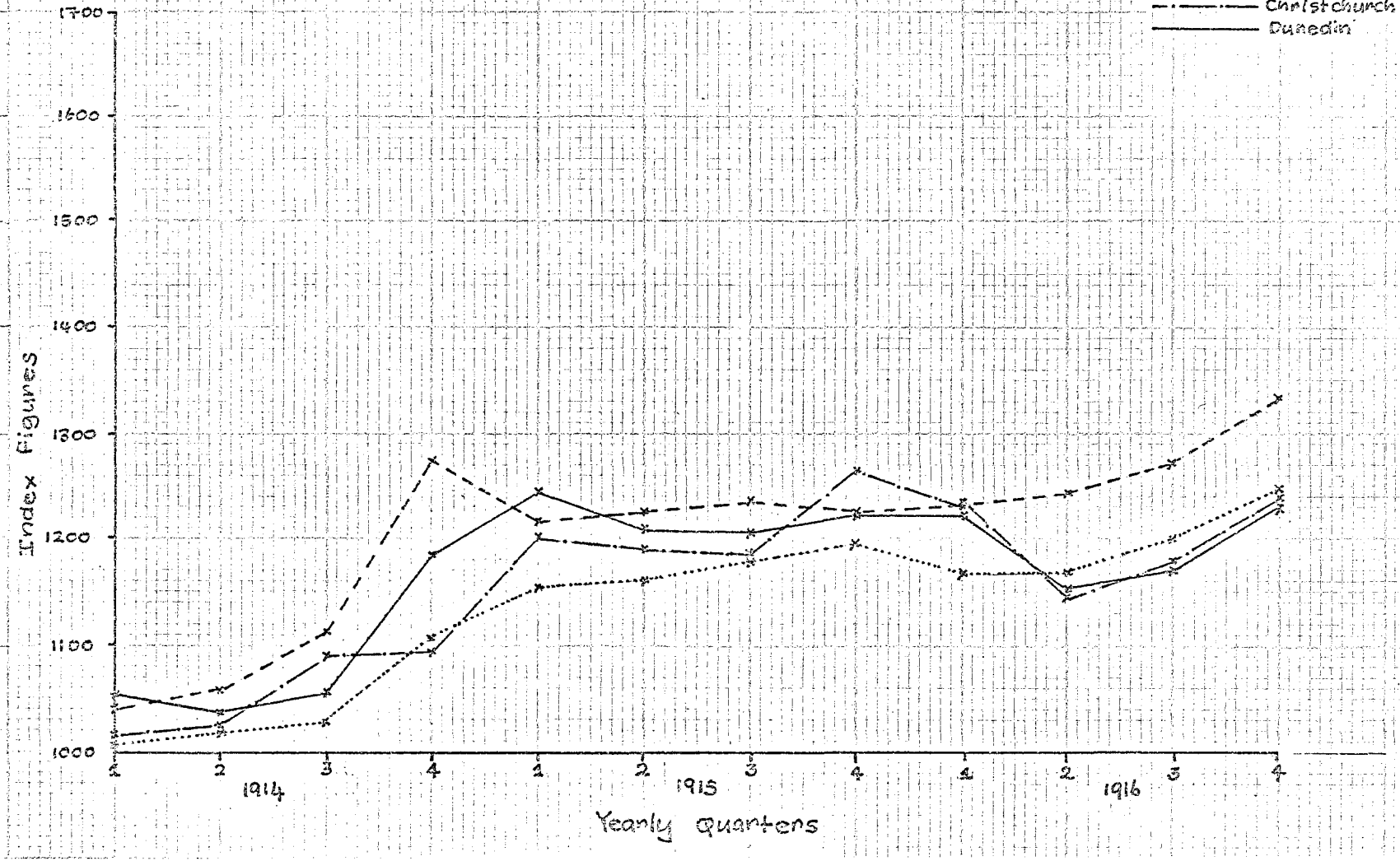


Fig 5·3 Cost of Living: Groceries

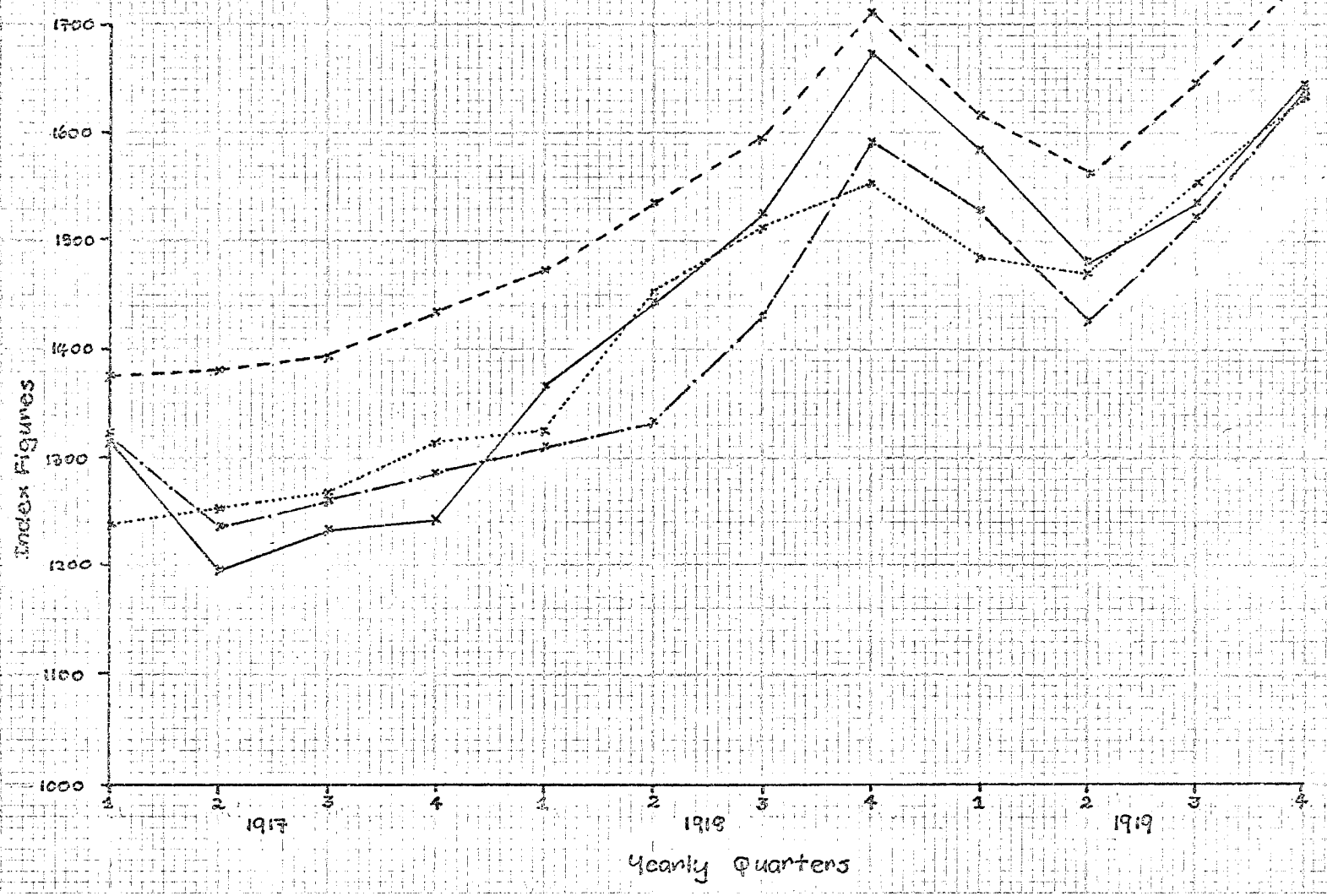


Fig 5·4 Cost of Living: Meat

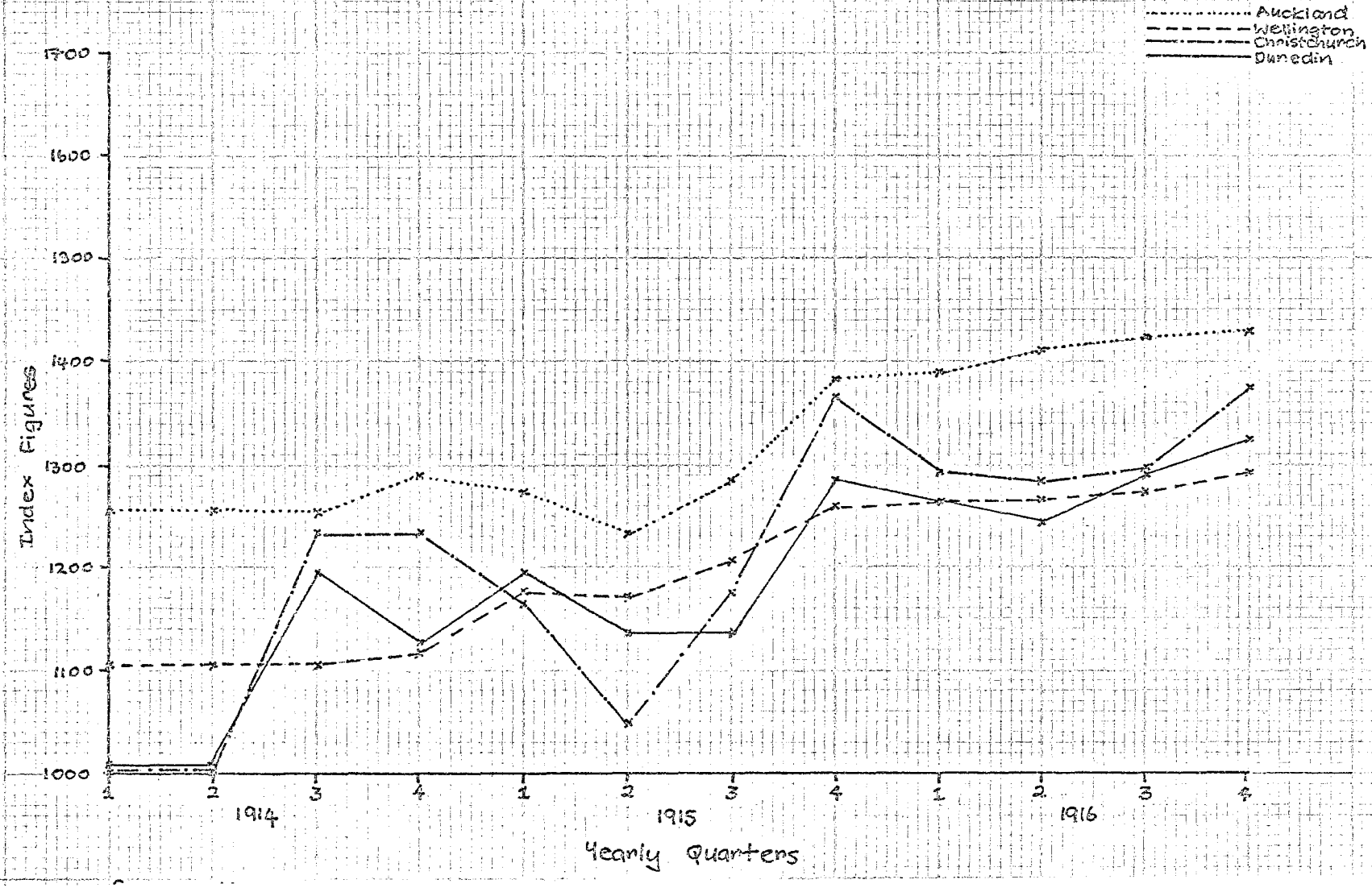


Fig 5.4 Cost of Living: Meat

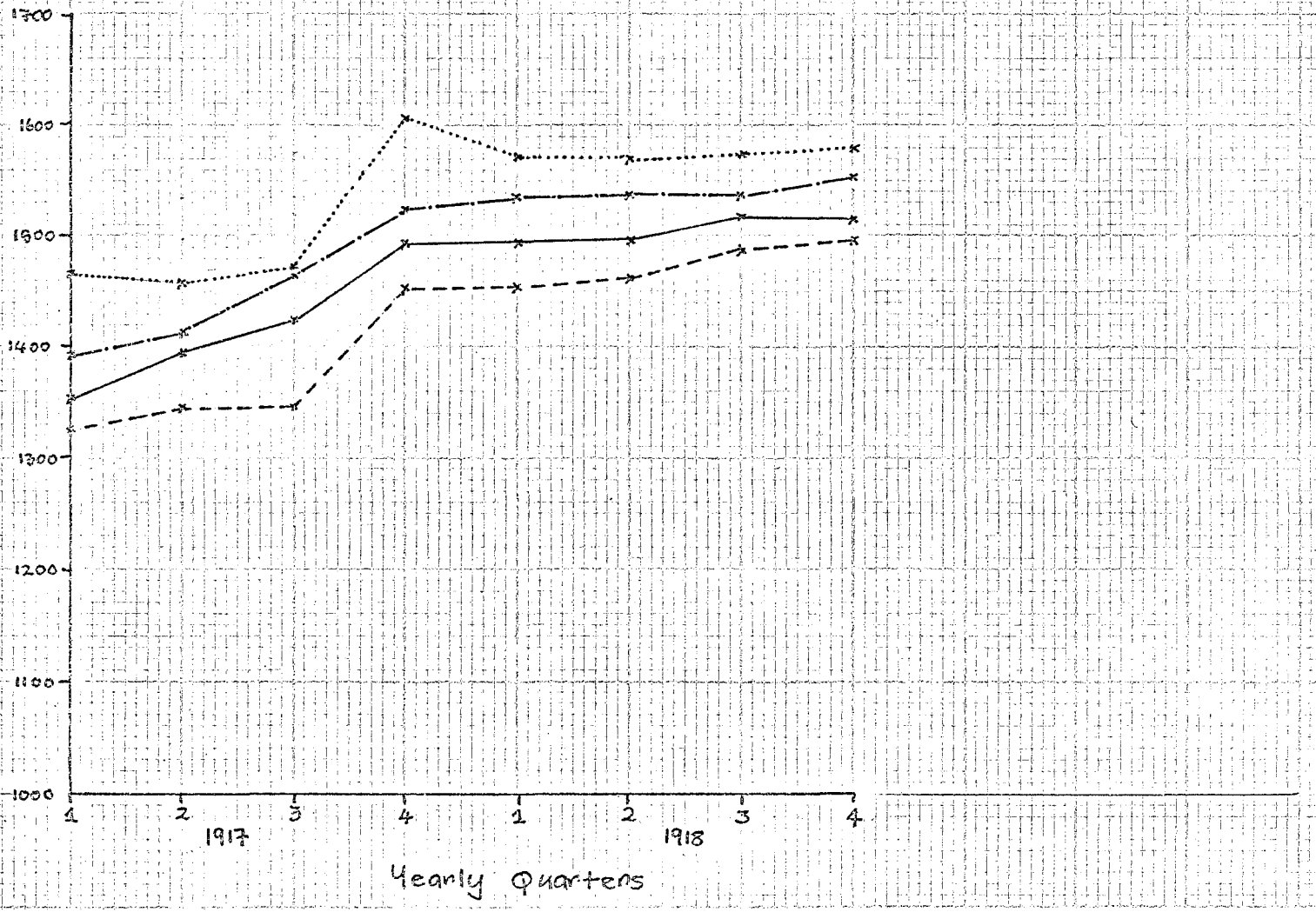
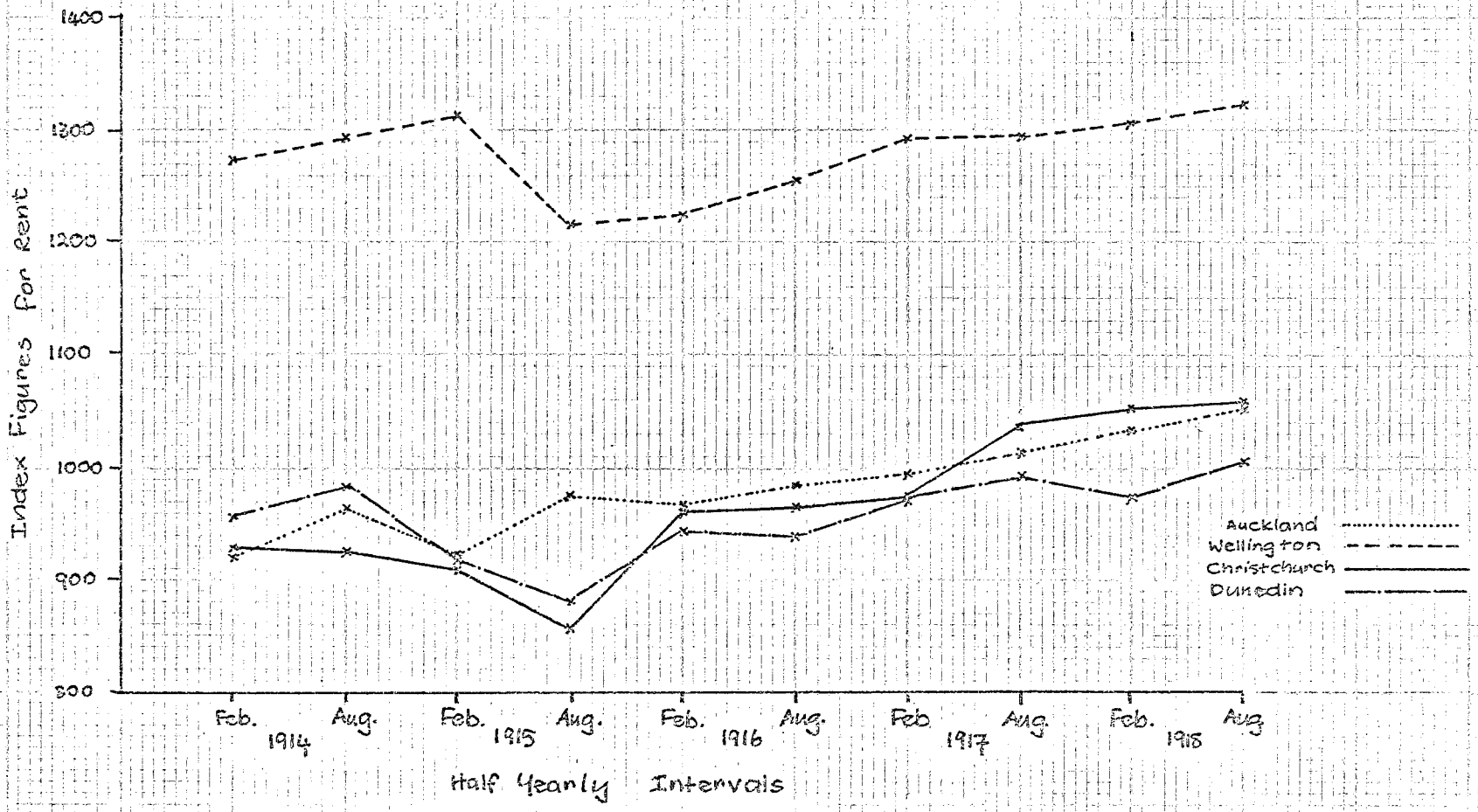
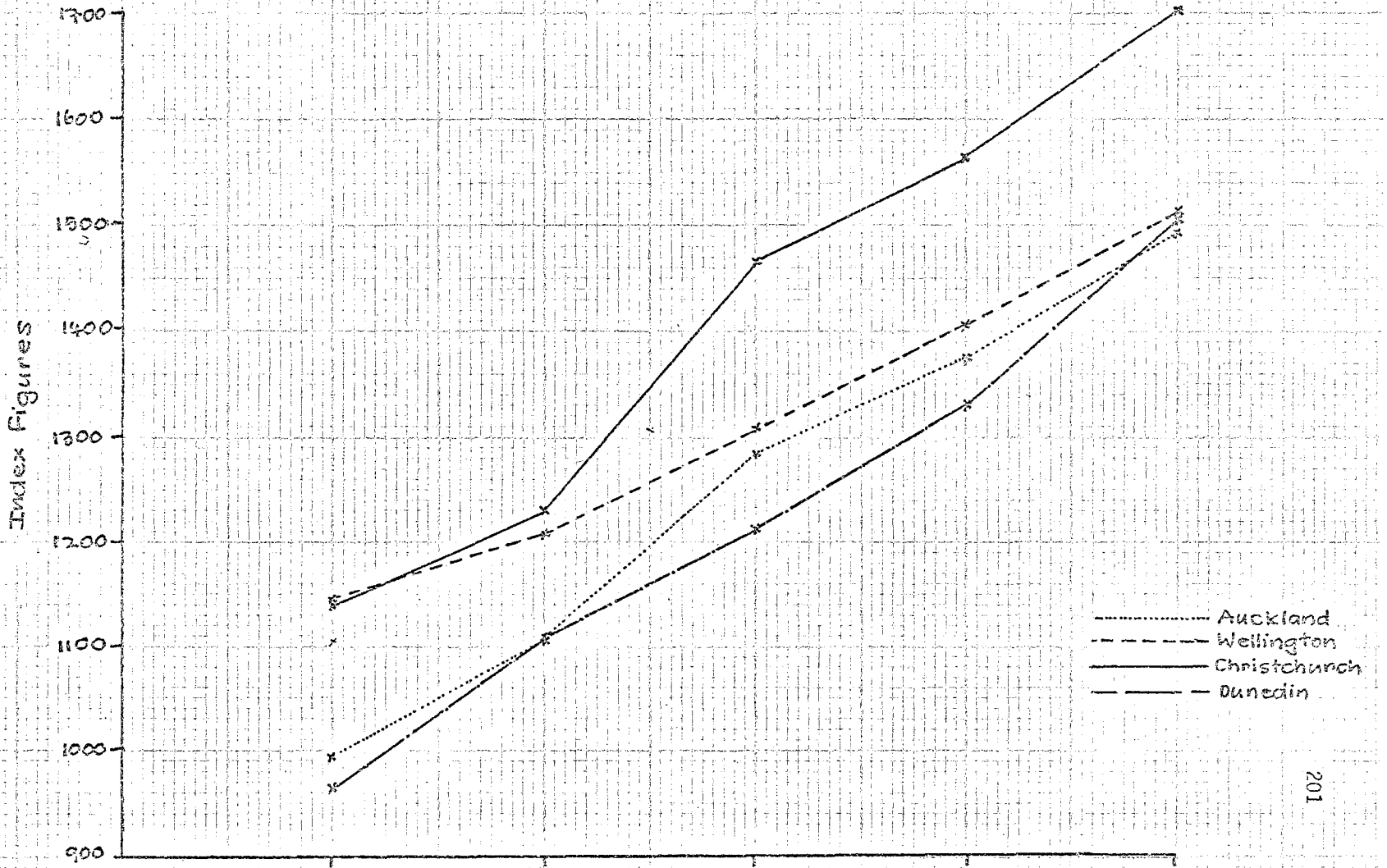


Fig 5·6 Cost of Living: Rents, Four Main Cities



Source: New Zealand Official Year Book, 1915-1919
Note: There was a change in the method of data collection in 1917. However, the comparison between cities holds good.

Fig 4.5 Cost of Living: Light, Fuel, Four Main Cities



Source: New Zealand Official Year Book, 1920, p.369

CHAPTER VI:

LABOUR AND EDUCATION

When the New Zealand Labour Party was formed, education was high on the list of priorities. However the party plank called merely for 'Free, secular and compulsory education from kindergarten to the university'. Little was said about the nature of that education, or the values and view of the world that it pre-supposed. Yet by this time, Christchurch labour had been actively involved in education for a decade and a half and much thought had been given to these issues. By 1916, labour was active in the Technical College and the Workers' Educational Association. Labour leaders accepted employers' assumptions behind the provision of technical education for workers, but some soon came to see the ideological foundation of education. This was especially evident in the formation of the WEA and Labour's war-time efforts to influence its educational programme.

The commitment to the Technical College came first. The Christchurch Technical College had been established in 1902, but agitation about the need for technical training and dissatisfaction with the narrow range of educational courses available had been evident in the city since at least the 1880s. Some courses for adults had been offered outside the university in arts and sciences, but there was no vocational or technical training apart from apprenticeship schemes, or private schools and tuition. Technical education was for workers. The founders of the Canterbury colony had given thought to the needs of the elite of their settlement and had consequently planned for a university college but had done little for those lower in the social scale. Some unions tried unsuccessfully to get courses undertaken by the university in subjects relevent to their

trades.[1] However, the initiative that led to the establishment of a technical college was not made by the labour movement. It came from employers.

In June 1901, the secretary of the Canterbury branch of the Agricultural and Pastoral Association approached the Canterbury Industrial Association to secure a joint approach to the university in order to establish courses in technical education.[2] The plan was that these courses should be under the control of a special committee, consisting of representatives of special groups in the community - the Industrial Association itself, the Employers' Federation, the Chamber of Commerce, local bodies and the Trades and Labour Council.[3] All these groups were invited to attend the conference that had been arranged with the university authorities, when the organisers hoped that the scheme would be launched.

As with the earlier approaches from the unions, the university remained adamant that such undertakings were outside its scope and refused to organise technical courses. The employers then turned to the idea of establishing an independent technical college. The Seddon government had recently drawn up legislation designed to promote the formation of technical colleges in New Zealand. Some financial assistance for their establishment had been made available. The rest of the necessary cash had to come from interested community groups, who were in return entitled to representation on the Board of Governors. Once employers in Christchurch turned to this idea, planning and organisation went ahead rapidly without any hitches. The first meeting of the Board of Governors of the Christchurch Technical College was held in November, 1902.[4]

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1. P 30 Jan 1903, Technical College scrapbook
2. CIA Minutes, 7 Jun 1901
3. Ibid., 31 Jan 1902
4. Minutes of the Technical Education Conference, 29 Nov 1902, in Technical College Minutes

The Board was dominated by employer and farmer representatives. The first chairman was W. Minson, head of one of the largest retail firms in the city.[5] Formal involvement by political parties or organisations had been rejected. An initiative from the Progressive Liberal Association had been rebuffed,'the Committee ... desirous of not giving ... any political bias.'[6] But inspite of this repudiation, the whole thrust of Board policy had a political motive. The farmers, manufacturers and employers who threw their weight behind the formation of the College had in mind a very definite objective of thus furthering their own interests. It was their aim to strengthen and establish New Zealand produce and industry on the competitive market place. As Minson declared, they wanted to 'make their scheme of education something that would assist their industries to gain a firm foothold in the soil of New Zealand.'[7] This was strictly utilitarian education. Subjects were chosen for usefulness; anything 'not at present essential' should be jettisoned and attention concentrated upon 'more immediately important subjects'.[8] Lads who left school too early to enter immediately into a apprenticeship schemes could go into 'continuation classes' where the curricula was rather more rounded and all-purpose. Nevertheless, these were designed to 'specialise and act as feeders for the practical classes' - manual, commercial or agricultural. The intention was always 'education more practical, therefore more useful and effective...'[9]

In 1906, four years after its establishment, the continuation classes of the Technical College were expanded into a full-scale technical day school. The college format now more closely approximated that of

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5. LT 16 Jan 1903, Technical College scrapbook
6. CIA Minutes 27 Jan 1902
7. LT 16 Jan 1903, Technical College Minutes
8. Ibid., 2 Feb 1906, Correspondence with John Howell 2 Mar 1904
9. Ibid., P 6 May 1903; Ibid; Chairman's Report 7 Jan 1904

other secondary schools. The scope for pupils widened, but the intention remained the same. The new Director, John Howell, declared his aim to organise:

> such an education as will enable ... pupils the more readily to become skilled in the occupation which they have taken up. It, is intended, in short, to be to the skilled artisan, mechanic or clerk what the ordinary secondary school is intended to be for the professional classes.[10]

Employers, producers and manufacturers wanted a workforce with certain qualities. To ensure the smooth operation of their enterprises, they needed capable and efficent workers, highly skilled and self-motivated, but at the same time, highly obedient and docile. Through technical education they aimed to produce individuals tailored to the needs of the workforce as employers saw them; individuals who would fit into, not question, the structure of the workforce. Moreover, there was more than a small hint of social control in the intentions of the founders of the college. The Board of Governors saw the early continuation classes as an effective way of coping with young boys who otherwise whiled away their days roaming the city streets in larrikan gangs.[11] The agricultural courses at the college were established with the avowed intention of halting the drift of young men from the country.[12]

The Technical College Governors also believed it important to train and mould young women. In 1910 the College acquired a hostel, intended for the double purpose of accommodation and training ground for young women in domestic duties. Housekeeping could not be taught, it was beleived, without a house to keep. The domestic courses were not designed primarily to produce domestic servants. Rather women were to be fitted

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10. Technical College Minutes, Correspondence with John Howell 2 Mar 1904
11. Ibid., Technical Associated classes 2 Feb 1906
12. Ibid.

for the role of wife and mother. Just as the boys graduated fitted for a lifetime as a working man, so the girls were turned out equipped with the skills to be wives of working men.

A vision of society, indeed of a whole world order, underlay this policy. The founders of the Hostel aimed at the preservation of the nuclear family with women as home-makers:

> We have been a long time building up the "home" idea, but it will take very little time to pull it down .... Very soon will growing girls come to regard life as one long scrambling picnic detached altogether from archaic notions of home care and home duty. [13]

Should such notions disappear, the nuclear family would also vanish and co-operative home-making on some socialist model become the accepted order. This would endanger the survival of the country. The birth-rate would automatically fall, since women would be busy outside the home and there would be no room for children in the new co-operatives. The nation would consequently risk invasion from the over-populated, non-white countries. Far better that women should bolster the status quo and adhere closely to the traditional roles: ... the moulding of the child, the

> consecrating of the woman, the uplift of the man. All these things require the atmosphere of the "home" ... woman has been a slave to it, but worse is her slavery if she has none .... the only permanent solution is to organise and elevate women's work, and this is what Canterbury is dimly feeling after. [14]

The founders of the Technical College believed that they were offering something worthwhile to working people. A fine chance was being provided, an 'excellent oppprtunity for young tradesmen to improve

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13. The Hostel, Journal of the Girls' Hostel, Christchurch Technical College, Nov 1910, p.5

14. Ibid.

themselves'.[15] But essentially, technical education was not intended to bring about great social mobility. The workman might become a skilled workman, but he remained a manual worker. The girl might become a skilled and competant wife, but her skills were those needed in a working class family - she was not taught the social graces in the manner of the wives and daughters of the upper class.

However, many workers did not want education to fit them for the needs of employers in this way. The interest in technical training was rather less than the governors had hoped. From the first, some leaders of the industrial labour movement had believed that it was 'uncertain whether great enthusiasm could be roused among members of the trades' but had trusted that the 'interest of the masters would readily compel interest among their men'.[16] However the men were not so eager to be compelled. Manual classes got off to a very slow start. A year after their inauguration, it was found that 'entries and attendence have been unsatisfactory, and ... it has been disappointing to have to close some of the classes for want of sufficent students'.[17] The sons of many working men were eager to educate themselves into at least a clerical job, rather than to follow their fathers into manual work. Even after ten years of operation, on the eve of the First World War, enrolments were still greatest in the commercial classes[18] at the college.

In the early 1900s, when the College was being planned, labour and radical leaders were enthusiastic about the Technical College and its potential. Tommy Taylor had been an advocate of technical education since before the beginning of the century. Taylor had been impressed by the results of German innovations and had called for New Zealand to copy

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15. Technical College Minutes, Technical Associated Classes 31 Dec 1904
16. LT 16 Jan 1903, Technical College Minutes
17. Ibid., 31 Dec 1904
18. Technical College Review Vol 1(2) Nov 1913, p.6

that country's technical institutes at least four years before Seddon and his ministry took action.[19] He was an invited guest at the first meeting of the Board of Governors in Christchurch, along with John McCullough. McCullough was then still an employee at the Addington Railway Workshops but one of the most popular of local unionists. He was a trustee of the Christchurch TLC.[20] McCullough was enthusiastic about the introduction of a technical college. His only fear was that farmers whom he considered already sufficently pandered to by the government, should somehow manage to wrest control of the College and monopolise it for agriculture. The Board should give its attention to the city trades, he urged.[21]

The other leading unionists in the city were similarly enthusiastic. Metal workers had always been amongst union groups most enthusiastic about technical training. In 1903 their president was delighted at the launching of a technical college. With John McCullough he agreed that the university had been of 'too little practical advantage'[22] for working men. The president of the Christchurch Trades and Labour Council was then Ernest Gohns, a tailor. He envisaged nothing but benefit from the college. It would keep his particular trades from 'being captured by female workers', a good thing he believed since some of the more skillful work could never be done by women. Gohns believed that the theoretical classes would enable New Zealand tailors to 'keep up with London and Paris Standards [sic]'.[23]

The political wing of the Christchurch labour movement was rudimentary in 1903. The Trades and Labour Council, on the other hand, was at the time a powerful institution. Over a hundred unions in the city were affiliated

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19. Charles Billcliff, op.cit., p.49
20. T.L.C. Annual Report, 1904
21. LT 16 Jan 1903, Technical College Minutes
22. P 30 Jan 1903, Ibid.
23. Ibid.

at certain points during the 1900s and within the Council, the skilled trades were probably the strongest voice. Organised labour in the city thus tended to be dominated by skilled workers. Men like Gohns and McCullough who had themselves undergone apprenticeships and had struggled to raise themselves within the working-class ranks led the movement. They were proud of the measure of self-improvement they had personally achieved. They wanted other workers to have the same chance. Hence their interest in technical education. Their viewpoint was perhaps parochial and narrow. It looked to improve conditions and level of skill within the trades and occupations of those already at the top of the wage-earning hierarchy, rather than to the condition of the working class as a whole. Christchurch labour leaders at the turn of the century saw technical education as a means of improving the lot of working people by making them more competent; upward mobility within, not out of, the working class.[24]

This remained the attitude of the wing of the labour movement which kept up a steady involvement with the Technical College in the years before and during the First World War. Trades Council representatives active on the Board of Governors were preoccupied with standards and curricula of manual classes. No labour representative became chairman of the Board, although one TLC leader, Harry Rushbridge, served as vice-president for a time. Generally, it was the unions of skilled workers who made contributions to the finances of the college. Typographical workers and engineers made regular donations and took a

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24. Cf. W.H. Oliver, 'Reeves, Sinclair and the Social Pattern' in Peter Munz [Ed] The Feel of Truth, A.H. & A.W. Reed, Victoria University, Wellington, 1969. Oliver suggests that education in New Zealand has had a 'continual declassing' effect on the working class: '"knowledge is power" has either revolutionary or self-improvement connotation. In New Zealand it has always had the latter.' (p.164) However, it is not a 'declassing' process if workers' aim is to move within, not out of their class. Labour leaders recognised that technical education was class education. Their quarrel with university education was not that it was unavailable, but that it was not suited to workers' needs. This was consolidation, not destruction of a class system.

steadfast interest in the work of the subcommittees deciding curricula.[25] One union of unskilled workers, the General Labourers' Union, also took a sustained interest[26] but this may have been due to the involvement of Ted Howard, who had a life long interest in all forms of education. Howard served one term as a TLC representative on the Board of Governors[27] before the war.

Labour representation on the Board slowly but steadily increased during the pre-war years. By the time war was declared, in 1914 at least eight members were associated with the labour movement.[28] As political labour gained successes on local bodies, labour men were sent along to the Technical College as representatives. Ada Wells became the first woman Governor after being elected to the City Council in 1917. At the end of 1918, labour numbers were cut dramatically when the system of representation was changed and the entitlement of the TLC dropped from five to one.[29]

During the first two decades of its existance, changes did come about in the curriculum, organisation and ethos of the Technical College but they were not initiated by labour. Rather they came about due to the drive and energy of John Howell, appointed Director in 1906. Howell came from a middle class background, an English Quaker who became a leader of the small group of Quakers in Christchurch. He took part in a number of radical agitations in the city before 1914, particularly the resistance to compulsory military training. He joined the Fabian Society soon after its formation by Harry Atkinson in 1908.

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25. Eg. Technical College Minutes, Trades Committee 1 Aug 1913
26. Eg. Ibid., 6 Jun 1917; Ibid., 7 Apr 1916
27. Ibid., 7 Apr 1911
28. Ibid., 5 Jun 1914
29. Eg. Technical College Minutes, Special Committee, 8 Aug 1918

The Christchurch Fabians, about forty in number[30] met weekly to discuss current political issues and problems, and to work out strategies to advance their own particular solutions. They turned their attention to education at a time when the thinking of the labour movement about the issue was still rather superficial. The Trades and Labour Council remained preoccupied with technical training. The demands of the political wing were elementary. In 1904, the education plank of the Christchurch-based Political Labour League had called merely for school texts to be made available at cost price.[31] In 1905 its successor, the Independent Political Labour League, wanted the same thing with the added demand that education should be free, secular and compulsory.[32] The essential idea was to provide more education. There was little interest in the quality or nature of that education.[33]

The Fabians considered these demands 'vague and restricted'. They turned to John Howell for proposals 'which would be both explanatory and definite'.[34] Howell, his wife and four others drew up a scheme that covered not only the availability of texts, but the streaming and teaching of pupils up to the age of seventeen, and their employment in the workforce.[35] Some of these proposals were echoed by one or two labour leaders,[36] but they had no great impact. Howell had more immediate success in putting his theory into practice within the Technical College, where his position as Director gave him considerable influence.

Howell did not believe in educating the young to escape from their social rank or rise in the world but he did believe in bringing art and

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30. R.W. Heath 'Labour Politics and Education. New Zealand 1904-1935' unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of Victoria, Wellington, 1965. Appendix A, p.106-7
31. Ibid., p.7
32. Ibid.
33. Ibid., p.3-9
34. Ibid., p.12
35. Ibid.
36. Eg. Mrs. Atkinson wrote to W.T. Mills about the policy of the ULP in 1910. Ibid., p.18-20

culture to those 'who would later on have to perform routine tasks in society'.[37] This was not out of step with those few leaders of the political labour movement at the time who were also giving the matter serious thought. 'Professor' Walter Mills, brought out from America by the Trades Councils to act as a labour organiser, was one of those very few. However, like Howell, Mills did not aim to use education to alter or renovate society. Rather, the 'school must answer to the dominant influences in society - ... or it must find itself out of touch with the established order of things.'[38]

In Christchurch meanwhile Howell worked steadily to expand the non-utilitarian side of the Technical College curriculum. In 1906 when he was first appointed, it was agreed that pupils were first to be given a 'sound general education' to the level of about standard six; after that it was 'practical work in elementary science.'[39] This remained the core of the day-school's function, but Howell promoted extra-curricular sporting and cultural activities with great success. By the outbreak of war, pupils of both sexes played sport: soccer and rugby for the boys, hockey and cricket for boys and girls, and gymnastics and basket-ball for the girls alone. Students and staff co-operated in the production of musicals and theatricals. A strong esprit de corps developed; the school magazine proclaimed the pride and enjoyment of the school in its achievements. Howell came to be held in high regard and affection.[40]

Howell believed ardently in the worth of the democratic institutions and traditions of British liberalism. Civil rights and liberties like freedom of speech, conscience and the press he regarded as the most essential props of any social system that claimed to be just and righteous.

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37. R.W. Heath, op.cit., p.13
38. Ibid., p.16
39. Technical College Minutes 2 Mar 1906
40. See Technical College Review Vol 1(1) Nov 1912 - Vol 1(4) Nov 1915 passim

Howell wanted his pupils to share his convictions and to take a vigorous part in the democratic institutions of their own society. This understanding and knowledge would ensure the continued existence and proper function of democracy. In 1911, he instituted a school parliament. From among their number, pupils elected their MPs. During the 'election campaigns' for the school, contentious issues of the day were debated. During one industrial dispute, 'Jimmy Thorn', a well-known trade unionist in Christchurch before the war, argued the labour cause and 'swayed his audience by his vehemence on the question of the strike.'[41] He was elected by a large majority. Pupils also took part in formal debates. No subject was bared: 'That the Yellow Peril is a real Peril' they debated on one occasion, and 'That the tactics of the militant Suffragette are not Justifiable'[42] on another.

Howell's convictions about the worth and need for democracy were perhaps more typical of a middle-class radicalism than of working-class socialism. However, other convictions brought him into close association with the labour movement. His religious beliefs as a pacifist made him a confirmed anti-militarist and opponent of compulsory military drill. This helped forge an alliance with the labour contingent on the Board of Governors, who tried to use the Technical College to force the government into recognition of exemptions from drill.[43] Howell also associated with labour leaders through the National Peace Council. He was the NPC delegate from the Society of Friends.[44] The bond of anti-militarism became stronger during the war. Within the College, just as in the community at large, the anti-militarists were forced to look to the labour movement for sympathy and support.

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41. Technical College Review Vol 1(4) Nov 1915, p.16
42. Ibid., Vol 1 (2) Nov 1913, p.9
43. Eg. Technical College Minutes 6 Oct 1911; Ibid., 7 Mar 1913
44. Eg. C.R.N. Mackie to John Howell, 25 Jun 1915, Mackie Papers

The First Assistant at the Technical College was Noel Goldsbury, a Quaker,[45] like Howell, but also a man of military age. When conscription was introduced, Goldsbury knew he was doomed for trouble and shortly before the end of the war, in late 1918, he was called up. He refused a medical examination, was court-martialled and imprisoned as a military defaulter. Goldsbury then applied to the Board of Governors of the Technical College for leave of absence. When the issue came up for discussion, Labour members ensured that they were present in full numbers and full voice. They argued vigorously in his defence, Ada Wells taking a strong lead. The other Board members, perhaps swayed by their arguments or unaware of the full implications of the move, agreed to the granting of leave.[46] The public backlash was immediate and vociferous.

Board members who had agreed to leave of absence were publicly rebuked and repudiated by community groups. The resignation of Ada Wells was demanded. Within hours all the non-labour members of the Board repudiated the 'damnable resolution'. Some publicly apologised for 'overlooking our returned heroes'.[47] The whole issue was forced back to the vote on the Board of Governors, and this time leave was refused. The Labour representatives remained alone in favour of Goldsbury. It was a long time before the anger and sense of outrage that the incident inspired really abated. The Chamber of Commerce had threatened to cut off financial contributions and remained dissatisfied even after leave of absence had been rescinded. The Chamber turned to probe the loyalties of other Board members, who in turn sent a tart rejoinder pointing out that since all had lost loved ones at the front, further proofs of patriotism were quite unnecessary.[48]

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45. Report and Selected Minutes of the General Meeting of the Society of Friends in New Zealand, Wellington, 1919, p.37

46. See LT 5 Oct 1918, p.9, c.1; Ibid., 9 Oct 1918, p.8, c.2; Ibid., 8 Oct 1918, p.4, c.6; Ibid., 18 Oct 1918, p.7, c.5

47. Eg. See CCC, LT 8 Oct 1918, p.4, c.6; Heathcote County Council, Ibid. 9 Oct 1918, p.8, c.2; Ibid., 15 Oct 1918, p.5, c.1

48. See LT 16 Oct 1919, p.6, c.6; Technical College Minutes 14 Dec 1918

Nevertheless, the trouble continued. Howell as Director and a known anti-militarist, became a target. Leonard Isitt led the attack. The prayer that Howell used each morning to open the school day, Isitt considered 'almost more concerned with the welfare of the enemy than of our own land'.[49] The offending phrase called for blessings upon the people 'of that great and fair land with whose rulers we are at war'.[50] There were calls for Howell to be dismissed because of his 'unpatriotic views'.[51] The Board resisted. Discontent remained so strong however, that it was decided to have a government inspection but at the same time Board members declared their admiration of the 'truly magnificent' efforts of the students and staff, particularly the Director, on behalf of patriotic and loyal purposes during the war'.[52]

Labour supported Howell throughout. They fought for him on the Board and made public declarations in his favour.[53] They approved of all he had tried to achieve at the College, even if they did not initiate the moves themselves. The report of the government inspector made it clear just how far Howell had taken the Technical College from its original narrow utilitarian concepts. The inspector declared that Howell had carried out 'educative work of the very finest kind, well calculated to counteract the narrowing tendency inherent in any system of training that is wholly or mainly utilitarian'.[54] Howell was further praised for his evident 'extra-ordinary ability' in running the College and building it up into an institution 'full of vitality and activity and doing extremely useful work among the young people of Christchurch'.[55] In great delight,

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49. LT 8 Nov 1918, p.3, c.4
50. Ibid., 14 Dec 1918, p.8, c.7-8
51. Technical College Minutes 14 Dec 1918
52. Ibid.
53. Eg. Ted Howard LT 22 Feb 1919, p.9, c.1
54. Technical College Minutes, 7 Feb 1919
55. Ibid.

the Board of Governors decided to send a copy of the report to all its disaffected affiliated bodies.[56]

Nevertheless, John Howell decided to leave Christchurch and in early 1919 he became Director of the Wellington Technical College.[57] It is likely that the bitter criticism and publicity he received in the closing stages of the war had much to do with his decision.

The connection with Howell had however, helped awaken the labour movement to the way the education system could be used for social conditioning. Howell had clearly perceived the way in which the schools were used to foster militarism. He opposed the school visits and lectures of touring naval and military leaders. He wanted the introduction of physical education to replace military drill.[58] The labour movement became similarly alerted and began to echo Howell's demands. Both the pre-war Labour Representation Committee and the Christchurch TLC wrote to the Education Board demanding the end of discrimination against those who would not take part in military drill.[59] Anti-militarism was thus one issue which began to sensitise the labour movement to the potential of education in the creation of political and social consciousness.

However, it was the militant wing of the local labour movement, and other leaders of the Fabian Society who played the crucial role in the rise of labour's aspiration to use education for more than technical training and self-improvement. It was this aspiration that led in 1915 to the formation of a branch of the Workers' Educational Association in Christchurch.

The WEA had begun in Britain in 1902. Albert Mansbridge and his wife had formed themselves into 'the committee of two', establishing the

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56. Technical College Minutes, 7 Feb 1919
57. Ibid., 7 Mar 1919
58. Eg. see R.W. Heath, op.cit., p.13
59. Eg. North Canterbury Education Board. Minutes 12 Mar 1913, letter from North Canterbury Labour Representation Committee re Scholarships and conscientious objection; TLC to North Canterbury Education Board re patriotic lectures, T.L.C. Minutes, 24 Jun 1916

first small nucleus of an organisation that spread across the world within only a few years. Their aim was to counter the class bias so clearly evident in the English educational system, with the universities and places of higher learning generally in the grip of the wealthy and titled. The first WEA classes were begun in England in 1904. By 1908 the Association had evolved a unique method of teaching due largely to the influence of R.H. Tawney, an Oxford graduate whose Christian Scoialist convictions led him into collaboration with contemporary labour and socialist movements. WEA courses were taught in the form of tutorials, small groups of up to twenty students who met regularly with their tutor for anything up to three years for one course of study. The first part of each study session was taken up by a lecture from the tutor, the second part by discussion. The aim was personal development, not vocational training.[60]

At the time the WEA was formed in Britain, the Christchurch labour movement was still preoccupied with utilitarian education, aiming to raise the standards and conditions in the trades. However, within a decade, the situation had changed dramatically. It can be seen in the shift of opinions of the leaders of the labour movement. John McCullough had in 1903 promoted technical education because the university was unsuited to the needs of workers. In 1915, he backed the formation of the WEA with words and money, hoping to bring the university 'nearer to the workers'.[61] This evolution in the thinking of labour leaders reflected an evolution in the nature of the local labour movement. In the early 1900s, the industrial wing of the labour movement had been pre-eminent in Christchurch. By the end of the 1900s, the political wing was vigorous and by 1912, the industrial organisation had decayed. The shift

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60. Star 24 Mar 1959, WEA scrapbook.
61. LT 5 Mar 1915, p.5, c.3

of emphasis to political activity engendered an interest in political ideas. Ideas about class, the nature of society, the role and strategies available to workers, all began to be debated with renewed vigour. There soon emerged two distinct schools of opinion. One was centred on the Fabian Society and the other on the small but energetic Socialist Party.

A New Zealand Socialist Party had been established in 1901, but had had a chequered career of revival and collapse. Nevertheless, a party branch was operating in Christchurch by 1908, under the determined leadership of Fred Cooke and Ted Howard. Although committed to political activity, the Socialist Party was influenced by syndicalist ideas through contact with the 'Red' Federation of Labour. Cooke and Howard began to publicly expound their theories and doctrines. Harangues in the Square and meetings at the Socialist Hall became the order of the day. The party began to acquire a following. Sunday evening meetings at the Socialist Hall in Oxford Terrace were frequently crowded with those eager to hear the lectures and discussions of political events and strategies.[62] Working people were beginning to undertake their own political education in a manner not seen in the labour movement before.

It was a development not uniformly welcomed in Christchurch, even by radicals. The Fabian Society certainly had misgivings. Contact between the labour movement and the Fabians had been limited. Although certain labour leaders, notably McCullough, had joined, the Fabians as a group remained middle-class and highly educated. By 1910, several self-employed businessmen, a factory owner, an accountant, medical practitioner and several teachers could be numbered among its members.[63] The Fabians probably preferred dealing with the TLC-based moderate wing

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62. Eg. see E.W. Cunnington Letters, passim, for years 1909-1912
63. R.W. Heath, op.cit., Appendix A

of the labour movement to contact with the Socialists. They sent their proposals on education to Walter Mills,[64] the moderates' organiser in the campaigns of 1912-3. Contact with the militants however, came about rapidly once the Socialist Party began organising and spreading political ideas. Fear, and the conviction the workers were about to tread the wrong path under the guidance of ill-informed and ignorant leaders, galvanised the Fabians into their own campaign of workers' education.

Eveline Cunnington played a leading role. She had long been interested in education.[65] In 1875, Cunnington had emigrated to New Zealand and within a year, she married. This marriage brought about a transformation in her life. With one move, she went from a 'rich man's daughter' to the 'wife of a poor man'.[66] The couple went to the Australian goldfields, but after eight years of marriage, the husband died. With her two children, Eveline Baines, as she was then, returned to Christchurch. Within a short time she met and married Herbert Cunnington, an electrical engineer. This restored her to comfort and affluence. Eveline Cunnington's interest in socialism dated from her time as an undergraduate at Queen's College, London, where under the influence of one of her teachers, she had come to see'the Oneness of Humanity ... that nothing must separate one from one's fellow creatures'.[67] This blossomed into Christian Socialism, which was strengthened by the experience of her first marriage. In Australia, she came into daily contact with the poor.

> I noticed how handicapped they were. Bad education, ugly surroundings, mean conception of life, crushed by

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64. R.W. Heath, op.cit., p.18-9
65. See Noel A. Parsloe, op.cit., p.2-4
66. E.W. Cunnington, Letters, p.7
67. Ibid., p.13

> an intolerable sensation that they were regarded as the "lower classes" and yet with such splendid qualities. [68]

In the comfortable circumstances of her second marriage, Cunnington turned at first to the education of young women of the wealthy elite. There was 'tremendous opening here for work among our leisure class girls, and through them to the men ....'[69] she wrote. This she believed was to be her 'last work on earth'.[70] The activities of the Socialist Party rapidly transformed her ideas.

Although Cunnington became the chief publicist of the Fabian Society, she declared that she did not want to 'organise work or workers ..'.[71] She did not join in the work of the subcommittee that drew up proposals on education for the labour movement;[72] her attention was still for women of the upper class. Nevertheless, her interest in socialism continued to attract her to the talks and lectures of touring socialist speakers. In February 1910, she went to hear an Australian agitator and was completely horrified by what she saw and heard. I was appalled

> at the ignorance, the spite, the pettiness, the back number style ... if we are going to make any head with Socialism we must send out an organised army of trained, educated speakers .... [73]

It became imperative, she now believed, to reach out through education beyond affluent young women, and start to influence the workers, 'badly led, and, of course, ignorant and passionate'.[74]

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68. E.W. Cunnington, Letters, p.13
69. Ibid., p.119
70. Noel A. Parsloe, op.cit., p.13
71. Ibid.
72. R.W. Heath, op.cit., p.13
73. E.W. Cunnington, Letters, p.120
74. Noel A. Parsloe, op.cit., p.12

Cunnington shared in part the aspiration of John Howell to bring the finer aspects of life, art and culture, to workers. She was in a position to do this. Her familiarity with the great works of literature allowed her to give public addresses. Her skill as a public speaker kindled the enthusiasm of the working class men and women that she addressed herself to. The trade unions began to seek her out as a teacher: ... I was asked by the leaders of the men to give some more

> lectures .... It was simply the biggest triumph in lecturing that I have ever had ... I spoke for an hour and a quarter, and held their attention. You could have heard a pin drop. Without vain boasting it was the finest piece of work I have ever done ... an eager crowd of 350 people, mostly men ... the place packed to its furthest limits, men standing on the window sills .... The working men if you please and women too, to hear a lecture on what do you think? "Dante". [75]

She became sought after at the Socialist Hall. Her connections among the wealthy and well educated of the city enabled her to introduce speakers who would otherwise perhaps never reached working class audiences. Louis Granville Whitehead,[76] a master at Boys' High School, later an Anglican Archdeacon, and Charles Chilton,[77] Professor of Biology at Canterbury College were two other popular lecturers.

The response of working-class people to this kind of information - literature, art and science - did demonstrate their evident aspiration to partake in the kind of liberal education that had been reserved primarily for the wealthy elite. This desire was only in part met by

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75. Noel A. Parsloe, op.cit., p.14
76. Ibid.
77. Ibid.

Cunnington and her associates. It remained in evidence and was one factor in workers' enthusiasm for the WEA in 1915. Dan Sullivan then supported the formation of a branch of the WEA in Christchurch because it gave ordinary people the opportunity of 'acquiring the high culture and mental development which in the past ... has been the exclusive preserve of the propertied few'.[78]

Although Cunnington was eager to make a liberal education available to workers, the mainspring of her activity lay deeper. She had a political motive. Cunnington feared the kind of consciousness and philosophy that workers were forging for themselves, she hoped to reason them into a less threatening state of mind. Moreover, she was convinced that a subtle approach was needed. It was useless

> attacking the working classes from the front. You antagonise at once. They close in their ranks, so to speak, and you have no chance of "getting there". You must take what I call flank movements.[79]

This meant a programme of infiltration. Each Sunday evening, after attending church service in the Englican Cathedral, Eveline Cunnington went and sat among the men and women at the Socialist Hall. There she listened and talked, 'using all the magnetism I know how, to draw them to trust me ....'[80] She was establishing personal bonds for political purposes.

At the same time, Cunnington was active on other fronts. At her urging the Fabians decided to conduct their own campaigns as answer to the Socialist Party. Speakers went out to all the working class suburbs of the city, arguing the case for their brand of socialism. Cunnington's

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78. S 16 Feb 1915, p.11, c.1
79. Noel A. Parsloe, op.cit., p.13
80. Ibid.

own address was entitled 'Unsocialism and How to Deal With It [sic]'. The workers 'rolled up in force, and greatly applauded'[81] she reported. Cunnington also prompted the Fabians to find allies from within the churches. She had always been a devout woman and remained a faithful adherent to the Anglican church throughout her life. Christianity was an essential part of her socialism and she longed for like minded clergymen to come forward and join her in the cause of guiding the working class along the best and righteous course of socialist evolution. 'I do wish some of our clergy would come forward as declared Socialists'[82] she once wrote to a friend. The Fabians decided to circularise local clergymen, pointing out the fashion in which numbers of the British clergy had stated Christian Socialist convictions.[83] This, combined with the personal contacts of Eveline Cunnington within the Anglican Church in Christchurch, was probably the initiative that led to the formation of the Church Socialist League in 1913. It was headed by a small group of radical Anglican clergymen, including O'Bryan Hoare, H.C. Money and J.L. Mortimer. The inaugural meeting of the League took the form of a service at the Anglican Cathedral and Eveline Cunnington was the only woman present.[84]

The Church Socialist League began to forge strong ties with the workers. The leading clergymen were unflagging speakers at the Socialist Hall, where they became popular figures. O'Bryan Hoare was acclaimed by Ted Howard as 'friend of the proletariat'[85] and when H.C. Money decided to return to England shortly before the war broke out, the Socialist Party petitioned for a special farewell service to be held in the Cathedral. The Anglican Bishop of Christchurch, Bishop Julius, himself

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81. E.W. Cunnington, Letters, p.121
82. Ibid., p.122
83. Ibid.
84. Noel A. Parsloe, op.cit., p.15
85. MW 18 Feb 1914, p.2, c.3

walked down to the Trades Hall to deliver the necessary written permission in person to Howard.[86] At the serv ice Howard praised those who

> had come amongst them to assist by word and deed - the men and women who were struggling to bring about the brotherhood of man - Mrs. Cunnington, Mr. O'Bryan Hoare, the Rev. J.L. Mortimer, the Rev. H.C. Money.[87]

Ted Howard's affection for Eveline Cunnington became especially strong in the years prior to 1914. He described her as a lady 'whom to know is to love'.[88] The war caused some abatement of the warmth of the association. Eveline Cunnington decided that she did not oppose conscription. This set her outside both the Fabians and the political labour movement.[89] Nevertheless, it was Howard who wrote her obituary after her death in 1916. He praised the 'love and Pity'[90] which she had shown to the less fortunate. Every word of his article reflected the personal respect that had been established between the two. At the same time, there had been political persuasion. Cunnington was delighted with the moderating influence she came to exercise over Howard. Other contemporaries also noted it.[91] In the acceptance of churchmen by the Socialists, Cunnington perceived the wider success of her policies. 'But just fancy' she rejoiced, 'what an advance to have a clergyman on their platform.'[92]

In pursuit of this education for political ends, Eveline Cunnington had created in Christchurch a whole programme of study courses and, tutorials which functioned in a fashion very similar to that evolved by

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86. Noel A. Parsloe, op.cit., p.15
87. Ibid.
88. MW 18 Feb 1914, p.2, c.3
89. Eg. See E.W. Cunnington, Letters, P.129; Noel A. Parsloe, op.cit., p.16
90. MW 9 Aug 1916; Ibid., 2 Aug 1916, p.7, c.7
91. Interview, Noel Parsloe, 21 Dec 1978. Comment by W.J. McCullough, son of John McCullough
92. Noel A. Parsloe, op.cit., p.14

the WEA in England. At her home in Merivale tutorial groups undertook courses of study in a variety of topics. One group in 1910 was studying the 'History of Philosophy' and another, economics.[93] Evidently Cunnington had been familiar with the techniques of the WEA. As early as 1908 she was organising her upper class young ladies into tutorial groups for a 'course of study on social questions'. She was first to lecture, discussions would follow. They were to meet 'every week for good hard study'.[94] In effect, the WEA was established in Christchurch before the First World War, in function if not in name. Albert Mansbridge had come to the country in 1913, intending to establish branches of his association. However, his arrival corresponded with the outbreak of the waterfront strike and he cut his stay to one day, merely corresponding with individuals known to be interested.[95]

The WEA was not formally established in Christchurch until 1915, when A.H. Meredith Atkinson, secretary of the New South Wales branch, came to the country with the intention of enlarging the WEA network. By this time both the working class and the middle class were predisposed in its favour. For their own reasons, each had turned to education as a means of shaping society. The Socialists were not blind to the intentions of the middle-class Fabians and Anglican Ministers in building up education courses. They retained a healthy scepticism. Howard enjoyed the prospect of the eminently respectable Anglican churchgoers being shocked by the emergence of radicalism from within their ranks. He looked forward to seeing them 'squirm' at the sight of their activist clergy.[96]

Church Socialist League speakers were not accepted uncritically by workers. Many were sincere and earnest, Howard admitted, but the

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93. Noel A. Parsloe, op.cit., p.19
94. E.W. Cunnington, Letters, p.114
95. Noel A. Parsloe, op.cit., p.19
96. MW 30 May 1913, p.6, c.6

League had its quota of 'wowsers'.[97] He described one address given by an Anglican clergyman at the Socialist Hall as a 'good piece of propaganda for the Church of England'.[98] However, the socialists expressed their reservations and scepticism most openly only when in the congenial company of their like-minded working class fraternity. Howard was noticibly more outspoken and prone to laugh in the pages of the Maoriland Worker than elsewhere.

The desire to use education for the molding of political consciousness was an important element in the development of the prototype WEA that came into existance in Christchurch before the war. It remained an important element behind the formal establishment of the WEA in 1915. The labour movement hoped to utilise the WEA in much the same way that Eveline Cunnington had earlier hoped to use her tutorial classes. Howard was in contact with Meredith Atkinson throughout 1914. In October, Atkinson sent his itinery for a New Zealand tour. Howard was asked to act as secretary of an interim committee along with the Fabian, Louis Whitehead.[99] Cunnington was by this time very ill. She did however, also join the interim committee which was set up in January 1915, expressing her 'entire approval'[100] of developments.

There had been a growing conviction within the Labour movement that the working class should control the institutions of the educational system. In 1913, the Maoriland Worker urged its readers to vote in Education Board elections. Labour speakers were asked to bring the matter forward at every opportunity since the paper feared the onset of sectarian rule and reprisals.[101] The Social Democratic Party, when

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97. MW 30 May 1913, p.6, c.6
98. Ibid., 26 Apr 1913, p.6, c.4
99. Noel A. Parsloe, op.cit., p.21
100. Ibid., p.8; Typescript dated April 1915, WEA Scrapbook
101. MW 18 Apr 1913, p.4, c.7

formed a little later that year, contained in its principles a class analysis of the education system.

> Because of the monopoly power of the exploiters the education opportunities of the workers and their families are limited. The schools ... fail to teach the honour of social service, the dignity of Labor, the shame of uselessness and the sense of loyalty to the common good, while they foster snobbery and promote class distinctions ....[102]

The WEA offered an alternative and perhaps a rival to the established university system. Howard cherished such a hope. He remained a loyal supporter of the WEA but in later years admitted his dissappointment at the course it had taken. He was proud of much that the WEA had achieved, but

> was not quite satisfied with the way the Association had developed. He had dreamed that the time would come when the Association would challenge the university system ... but you daren't do it ...[103]

he concluded sadly.

However, in 1915 Christchurch labour leaders were still uniformly enthusiastic. They worked to establish the WEA because they wished also to use it as a seeding and testing ground for their political theories and idealogy. Some workers feared that the movement might be appropriated by the upper class and used against the working class to thwart the development of political consciousness or deflect it to their own ends. They argued that the tutor was almost invariably highly educated, a member of the upper class. It was not in his interest to rouse the workers. The 'facts' would inevitably be presented in the light of his own class bias.[104] These reservations were dismissed by the leaders of labour in

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102. Eg. MW 13 Jan 1915, p.8, c.1
103. Typescript LT [?] 22 Mar 1930, WEA Scrapbook
104. Eg. MW 7 Jul 1915, p.7, c.4

Christchurch at the time. After classes had been operating for two years, Howard wrote gleefully of their success. He believed it refuted the doubts of the 'number of wisemen' who had said that the WEA was 'another trick on the part of the enemy to sidetrack Brother Dubb'.[105]

Whatever his later disappointments, Howard believed during the war that the WEA was fulfilling the function that he intended. It was fostering and purifying consciousness of class in the minds of Christchurch workers. The public lectures and debates were acting as a forum for labour agitators. 'We have taken our Socialist theories along and put them to the test of criticism' he wrote, 'and they have held good.'[106] Through the WEA, the socialists believed that they were reaching out to the untapped masses. Hundreds were drawn each week to the Trades Hall where classes were held, who would otherwise have never entered its doors.[107] Howard beleived that the whole process of raising political understanding was a dialectic and that addresses and debates with leading conservative figures in the community could only assist the workers. He welcomed a talk by the editor of the anti-labour Press, a gentleman whom many in the labour movement had hitherto believed distinguished by 'a lame leg, a forked tail and two very noticible protuberances on his forehead'.[108] Ted Howard declared that labourites were 'not too proud to be taught by our enemies'.[109]

The local industrial labour movement also saw the WEA as a tool in the creation of political consciousness. The Christchurch Trades and Labour Council was appealed to by a weaker North Island counterpart for advice on how best to drum up support. Christchurch replied urging the

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105. MW 17 Oct 1917, p.5, c.4-5
106. Ibid.
107. Ibid.
108. Ibid., 29 May 1918, p.5, c.5
109. Ibid.

need for the creation of a pool of competent and informed speakers to act as front-line agitators. The North Island TLC should set about the business of establishing a branch of the WEA. Only thus would there be 'many able speakers ... imbued with the necessary class conscious spirit so essential to an advocate of Labour principles.'[110]

In its early days, the participants of WEA courses in Christchurch were undoubtedly engaged in the business of creating political awareness. The 'chief desire for ... classes was in the field of economics'[111] and economics was considered the subject crucial to the understanding of socialism. The entire course of lectures delivered to the Wellington WEA in economics was reprinted in the Maoriland Worker, so important was the subject considered for workers' understanding. Most of those who became the leaders of the Labour Party during the 1920s and 1930s attended the early economics courses of the WEA. J.B. Condliffe, then an economics tutor for Wellington WEA recalled how the participants used the classes.

> After my lecture Harry Holland would state the Marxian interpretation of the subject under discussion, and Walter Nash would follow with the Christian Socialist view .... It was an exciting class, and the level of debate - often continued till midnight or after on the pavement outside the YMCA - was uncommonly high.[112]

In Christchurch the enthusiasm for economics was no less, but the level of sophistication may not have been as great. Howard reported that students showed a 'good sound general knowledge',[113] rather than an academic grasp of the subject. In the working class area of Sydenham, amongst railwaymen in Riccarton and within the engine drivers' union, the

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110. T.L.C. Minutes, 20 Jan 1917
111. WEA Scrapbook, reminiscence of James Hight
112. Ibid.
113. MW 15 Sep 1915, p.3, c.5

demand for economics was great.[114] All these groups were interested in political analysis. In the upper-class areas of Christchurch, the desire was rather for a liberal education. In Redcliffs, for instance, tutorials were in philosophy.[115] Some specialist courses were also established to give workers an insight into the way the institutions of their society functioned. A study was made of the operation and procedures of the Arbitration Court and of Parliamentary procedures, for instance.[116] Public lectures attempted to elucidate parts of the contemporary polemic about socialism. Meredith Atkinson delivered one of the very first addresses given under the auspices of the Canterbury WEA on the topic of syndicalism and guild socialism.[117]

The WEA was more popular in the first few years of existance than ever again. The response of working class people to the tutorial courses was 'phenomenal'[118] and the public lectures received a 'degree of support that must be seen to be believed'.[119] At times, more than 300 people joined in the rambles over the Port Hills[120] that the WEA organised. Perhaps many of the participants regarded the teaching and outings made available through the Association merely as cheap entertainment. That should not obscure the role that the WEA nevertheless played in creating political awareness and class consciousness.

This function of the WEA can also be seen in the conservative reaction. At first, a number of leading figures in the field of education had been in favour of workers' education. Charles Chilton, a professor at Canterbury University College became the first president

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114. WEA Joint Committee Minutes, 12 Dec 1918; Ibid., 12 Mar 1926
115. Ibid., 12 Dec 1918
116. Eg. WEA District Council Minutes, 7 Nov 1917; LT 31 Jan 1916, p.5,c.7
117. Eg. LT 8 Mar 1915, p.5, c.5
118. S 17 Oct 1919, p.3, c.2, Labour column
119. Ibid.
120. S.M. Cook 'Some Aspects of the History of the WEA in Canterbury, New Zealand' unpublished M.A. Thesis, Canterbury College, Christchurch, 1946. p.136

of the WEA.[121] He was 'quite sure' in 1915, that if there was a demand by workers, 'the professional class would be only too happy to help'.[122] Sir Robert Stout, Chancellor of the University of New Zealand,was equally enthusiastic about the WEA. 'If the workers would only take the question up themselves they would soon have tutorial classes and anything else they wanted'[123] he declared.

These conservative figures believed the WEA would be an effective means of taming the workers. The Sun, a daily Christchurch newspaper which took a consistent interest in the Association throughout the war, considered that the WEA had a 'distinct social value':

> ... For those who presume, or are selected, to speak and think for the workers, the opportunity afforded by tutorial classes is one to be eagerly seized. New Zealand Labour has so far been indifferently served in the matter of competent guides and mentors .... The empty catchcries will fail ... before the great facts of history - economic, social and political.[124]

Such predications were not borne out. Those who anticipated that the WEA would effectively tame workers, saw to their consternation that precisely the opposite appeared to be occurring. Stout, for instance, was calling by 1921 for the enforced closure of all classes organised by the Canterbury branch of the WEA. He was alarmed by the tone of the discussions that were being conducted and horrified by the sentiments expressed in public by some of the tutors and participants. Workers' educational classes 'will not be beneficial to our people if they are conducted by revolutionaries' he declared. Stout believed that the classes of the WEA in Christchurch were revolutionary cells, 'an implication that

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121. WEA District Council Minutes 1 Apr 1915
122. Typescript dated Apr 1915, WEA Scrapbook
123. Ibid.
124. Quoted by Noel A. Parsloe, op.cit., p.22

there is to be a revolution, and a bloody revolution ....'[125]

However, this vigorous pursuit of socialism within the WEA did not last. After a decade and a half of WEA activity, the fire of revolution had burned out, or at least the conservatives of the city no longer saw it as any kind of potential threat. James Hight was by then Rector of Canterbury College; he recalled the early days when 'it had been argued that the Association would foster a certain type of class feeling', but by then it was evident that there existed nothing but 'a very true spirit of co-operation'.[126] The Chairman of the Board of Governors of Canterbury College, Col. G.J. Smith, declared that during the war he had been under the impression that the WEA was a 'hot bed of Socialism'. By 1930, he was convinced that it would 'never make its followers Bolshevists or Communists.'[127]

The Labour protagonists of workers' education did not forsee this course of development in 1915. They believed that the WEA was 'proving a powerful educational and social force in the community',[128] actively assisting in the fulfilment of their political vision for the future. Christchurch Labour was convinced by the end of the war that the hour of its political success was not far distant. Sullivan declared that it was clear to the 'dullest and most prejudiced' that within ten years 'every state in Europe will be Labour governed'.[129] New Zealand could be in the front line of this movement, but it depended upon the workers' comprehension of political possibilities. Through the WEA, the mass of the workers were being uplifted. They were indeed being given access to the works of art, science, literature and philosophy that had been

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125. Dominion 19 Jan 1921, WEA Scrapbook
126. LT [?] 22 Mar 1930, typescript WEA Scrapbook
127. Ibid.
128. S 16 Aug 1919, p.5, c.1
129. Ibid., 17 Oct 1919, p.3, c.2

available only to the upper class. The potential of education for self-development rather than mere technical training was opened up. However, labour also saw the WEA as a political tool. Labour leaders believed that at the same time as workers were acquiring this liberal education, they were acquiring the knowledge to challenge its premises. Even before the war, radicals and socialists had recognised the importance of education as a means of raising political consciousness. The Socialist Party in its public harangues and activities at the Socialist Hall, the Fabians and the Church Socialists in their discussion groups and tutorials, were all struggling to mould the workers after their own fashion. The process continued in the early WEA. Labour had realised by 1915 that the education system taught not 'facts' but ideology.

CHAPTER VII:

LABOUR AND IDEOLOGY

The five years between the general elections 1914 and 1919 saw a remarkable development in the organisation, morale and public acceptance of the Christchurch labour movement's political wing. By the end of 1919, the local Labour Party, with three Members of Parliament, was stronger than that of any other centre. It had gained a hold on the allegiance of the workers of Christchurch that was unrivalled by the party elsewhere. Labour in the city faced the general elections of 1919 confident, self-assured and expecting to meet with success at the polls. This was a marked contract to its hopes and achievement in the 1914 general elections.

The SDP did not even control the political options. It was still possible for rivals to stand plausibly in workers' interests. Moreover, Christchurch Social Democrats did not see themselves as a real political force. They at least tacitly accepted the idea that their party would not hold power. The Liberals were seen as the alternative government to Reform. SDP candidates pledged themselves to support for Ward as long as Liberal legislation was 'along progressive lines'.[1] Moreover, the divisions between Social Democrats and Liberals was somewhat unreal. Hiram Hunter, the President of the SDP, announced that his party had entered into an electoral compact with the Liberals; the two parties had agreed not to oppose each other and so split the anti-Reform vote.[2]

By contrast, in 1919 Labour was assertive in its claim to be the party of urban wage-earners. There should be no 'deals' with the Liberals, Labour 'should contest every electorate'.[3] This enthusiasm was

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1. LT 23 Nov 1914, p.9, c.11
2. Eg. Ibid., 17 Nov 1914, p.9, c.2
3. MW 12 Feb 1919, p.4, c.5

well based. The divisive issue of prohibition had been laid aside and the political issues that were absorbing the attention of the electorate were working in Labour's favour. The party's war-time record had been demonstrated to be a creditable one. Even resistance to conscription had been shown to be based upon concern for soldiers' interests rather than an attempt to hamper the war effort. Christchurch Labour faced the electorate as a united party, soundly organised and financially stronger than ever before. Conversely the Liberals were demoralised. Despite Ward's attempt to buy votes with an array of glittering promises, the party's candidates found they could not escape blame for the economic dislocation which accompanied the war.

The NZLP had eight MPs after the general election in 1919. Three came from Christchurch. This was the result of much more than merely a good political campaign. There had been a change in the party's political identity. Labour had gone from the fringe to the mainstream of politics and become the acceptable or preferred party of most Christchurch workers. In this city, at least, Labour was no longer considered extremist. Throughout the war, the party had been at pains to refute accusations of extremism. The precise nature of the extremist label changed over the years, depending upon whatever international events made the most fearsome political bogey of the day. Immediately before and during the early part of the war, the chief political spectre was syndicalism. The International Workers of the World were particularly feared and their local manifestation was assumed to be the 'Red' Federation of Labour. However, after the Russian Revolution in 1917, and the rise of Lenin, syndicalism was dwarfed by Bolshevism as the most potent political catch-cry for anti-Labour forces.[4]

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4. S 21 Jun 1919, p.5, c.1

In Christchurch, Labour leaders strove to counter such scare tactics by stressing their party's moderation. Dan Sullivan, in his weekly newspaper column emphasised Labour's respectability. Labour men and women, he said, were 'sober-minded, mentally well balanced, and honestly actuated by a nobly inspired ideal ...'[5] As such, they were eminently suited to political power. He pointed out to the city's 'staid and respectable citizens'[6] that political experience frequently dampened the militant ardour of youthful radicals. One Parliamentary term, he claimed, had converted 'Paddy' Webb from a fiery and dangerous militant into an 'honest and sober minded'[7] representative of the people. He constantly reminded his readers that the labour movement already operated in a responsible fashion within many of society's institutions. This was especially evident, he said, in the operation of the Arbitration system.[8] Sullivan also put forward the Australian Labor government as an example of a responsible and sane working class party. Indeed, most local labour leaders used the Australian experience in this way and they were eager to fete and eulogise Andrew Fisher, the Australian Labor Prime Minister, when he visited New Zealand in 1915.[9] After the split in the ALP over conscription in 1916-7 however, Christchurch labour spokesmen looked more towards the Australian states for examples and especially to Queensland, where the Labor government of T.J. Ryan continued to enjoy political popularity throughout the war.[10]

In his campaign to construct a positive identity for Labour, Sullivan faced some highly placed and influential enemies. If several of the leading academics had been won over through the movement for

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5. S 27 Mar 1915, p.12, c.1
6. Ibid., 9 Feb 1915, p.11, c.2
7. Ibid., 27 Mar 1915, p.12, c.1
8. Eg. Ibid., 3 Apr 1915, p.12, c.2
9. LT 9 Jan 1915, p.10, c.2; Ibid., 13 Jan 1915, p.9, c.5
10. See Chapter V, p.170-2, p.188-9

workers' education, others remained implacably opposed to Labour and what they believed was its political philosophy. John Macmillan-Brown, Professor of History, was one. In early 1917, just after the conscription-repeal campaign had been waged by the LRC in the municipal elections, he publicly condemned the entire labour movement. Sullivan later described the speech as a 'tissue of wicked falsehoods'.[11] The professor, he said, had 'broken the bounds of all restraint in an effort to discredit Labour in the opinion of the community. IWWism and Pacifism, Socialism, and what I might term Hunnism were mangled together in a confused jumble'.[12] Sullivan said he had no quarrel with any condemnation of the IWW. He had 'denounced it ... often, and so has every other Labour speaker ....' IWW men had come to New Zealand, he admitted, but every one had been driven away by 'lack of encouragement'. The 'Red' Federation of Labour, often singled out for special condemnation, was also defended by Sullivan: 'my knowledge of the inner history of the Labour movement in this country enables me to say with truth', he declared, that members of the 'Red' Federation, 'however fiery' had not the 'slightest disposition' to put into practice the policies of the IWW. In twenty years of service in the New Zealand labour movement, Sullivan declared that he had never once heard an 'immoral doctrine suggested or subscribed to'.[13]

The awkward fact remained however, that the United Federation of Labour had at one time adopted the preamble of the International Workers of the World. Christchurch conservatives were not slow to use the fact against Labour. Hiram Hunter, who was for several years a member of the UFL Executive agreed that the organisation had initially adopted the

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11. S 14 Apr 1917, TLC Scrapbook
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid.

preamble. However, he emphasised that it had been repudiated and thrown out a year later. He explained its adoption in the first place as accident rather than intention: it was due 'to the fact that in many Labour documents there were repetitions of phrases and sentences'.[14] No one, he said, had seriously endorsed IWW ideas. The few IWWites who did exist in New Zealand were antagonistic to the leaders of the country's labour movement. The feeling was mutual.[15] Fear of the IWW influence in New Zealand was exacerbated by troubles in Sydney during late 1916 which were said to be due to the IWW there. J.T. Paul was again driven to the defence of the UFL and the adoption of the IWW preamble in 1912. Paul declared that he had personally not then agreed with its adoption and had been glad when it was soon rejected. Labour was now 'well content' to have it forgotten and not one individual who had a 'prominent position' within the IWW was active in New Zealand.[16]

Political creeds like Bolshevism however, soon became more important than the policies of the industrial wing of the labour movement. The revolution in Russia was at first greeted in New Zealand with some degree of cordiality, and a fair degree of confusion about its nature and aims. The Lyttelton Times believed initially that it was an uprising against German influences within the Czar's government and expected some benefits from it as a result.[17] Within the labour movement in Christchurch, there was a general feeling of goodwill towards the revolutionaries. Most were keen to see the improved position of the masses freed from the 'tyranny' of a despotic Czarist regime. Sullivan said that news of the revolution sent a 'thrill of joy to the hearts of democrats and lovers of liberty everywhere, and particularly to those engaged in the working

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14. LT 28 Oct 1916, p.4, c.4
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid.
17. Eg. Ibid., 17 Mar 1917, p.9, c.6-8

class movement'.[18] John McCullough was more cautious; he 'hoped' it was good news and that it might mean 'more democratic' government.[19] In the Maoriland Worker, Howard declared it was the opening salvoes of the revolution in New Zealand. 'It's coming, Brother!' he exclaimed.[20]

Initial enthusiasm soon gave way to more critical appraisal. By the beginning of 1918 Sullivan was reproducing criticisms of the drifts of events in Russia.[21] His anxiety to distance labour from the revolution grew after an incident that became known as the 'Christchurch sensation'[22] when Bob Semple defiantly proclaimed that if he were in Russia, he 'would be with Trotsky and Lenin'.[23] Unfortunately for Semple, many New Zealanders equated Bolshevism with free love and the abolition of marriage. Labour's embarrassment was compounded by the fact that Semple's outburst coincided with the arrival of a newscable purporting to announce that henceforth in Russia, women were to be held in common by all men.

The last thing that the Christchurch labour movement desired was to be implicated in dogmas that smacked of immorality. Accusations of immorality had long been a problem for socialist movements in Christchurch as elsewhere. Before the war, church leaders had attacked socialists on moral grounds. One pastoral letter had declared that:

> Socialism ... is committed to doctrines about marriage which must inevitably destroy the home, and so undermine the state. It makes the indissolubility of marriage ridiculous, race suicide rational, and children the property of the State.[24]

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18. S 27 Mar 1917, p.3, c.7
19. Diary Vol VI 20 Mar 1917, J.A. McCullough papers
20. H.O. Roth, 'The October Revolution and New Zealand Labour', P.S. 13 Sep 1961, p.46
21. Eg. S 26 Jan 1918, p.7, c.1-4
22. S 1 Mar 1919, p.5, c.2
23. See Chapter IV, p.148
24. E.W. Cunnington 'The Archbishop and Socialism' Fabian Society Leaflet no. 1, Christchurch n.d. circa 1914, p.1

read this stuff again and again .... Let the Archbishop refute the economics and leave our morals alone'.[25] The SDP made it very clear that it stood firmly committed to marriage and 'respectable' family life. In a list of arguments drawn up to persuade women to vote SDP, there were six points - three politico-economic and three social: women would gain the power to control the drink traffic and the party would guarantee the protection of the 'Comfort of the Home' and the 'Maintainence of Family Life'.[26]

The political labour movement in New Zealand did not suggest that a socialist order would bring about any radical change in the structure of family life or in sex roles. The home was still women's sphere and the Maoriland Worker declared that 'the woman who is above

> giving her best thought and attention to providing for the material comforts of herself and her family will probably also lack capacity to see other things in their true perspective.'[27]

When Labour did give thought to family and social life, it imagined it replete with comforts and conveniences, but basically unaltered. Luxuries like electricity, for instance, would be widely available 'harnessed to do most, if not all, of the laborious housework'. Women's tasks were to be made easier, her burden made lighter, not exchanged for another, afterall not everyone wanted to eat at the 'communal cookhouse'.[28]

Labour wanted no social revolution. Calls for equal pay were made as much to ensure that women had no unfair advantage in the market place as in the interests of simple justice; certainly they were not

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25. E.W. Cunnington, op.cit.,
26. MW 2 Dec 1914, p.1, c.3. The other points were equal pay, equal political rights and improved and protected working conditions.
27. Ibid. 2 May 1917, p.7, c.5
28. Ibid., 13 Dec 1916, p.7, c.3

made to enable women to replace men as the main breadwinners of families. Calculations for men's wages were based upon the needs of a family, those for women on personal needs only. Labour did not question the principle, Sullivan's quibble was that deliberations by men about the number and type of underclothes a young woman required was 'incongruous if not unseemly ....'[29]

The women active within the Christchurch Labour Party did little to question this conservative, even puritan attitude to women. Before she died in 1916, Eveline Cunnington had been one of the strongest defenders of marriage and 'purity' in women.[30] After the war Elizabeth McCombs rose to be one of the most successful women in the New Zealand Labour Party, but during the war she remained in the wings of politics, pre-occupied by her first object in life - raising a family. Labour believed that women might take on political activity, but it was an addition, not an integral part of their working lives. They had also to have proved themselves as wives and mothers. When the Christchurch LRC decided in 1917 to put up two women candidates for the municipal elections Dan Sullivan defended their selection: If there is any

> idea in the public mind that women who take an interest in social matters necessarily manifest masculine demanour, the two ladies selected may be trusted to absolutely disprove that silly idea.[31]

It remained a matter for pride to Elizabeth McCombs that she was a 'fully domesticated woman .... A splendid cook and dressmaker'[32] able at the same time to undertake public office. She proved herself the 'equal of men' without 'attempting to ape their habits'.[33] Her contemporaries

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29. S 25 Jan 1919, p.5, c.2
30. Eg. see E.W. Cunnington, Letters. Passages on marriage, etc. passim
31. S Mar-Apr 1917, T.L.C. Scrapbook
32. Isabel Langford, op.cit., p.21
33. Ibid.

were full of praise, she was 'not ... a pronounced feminist'[34] nor a feminist 'in the offensive sense'[35] they declared.

In politics, certain areas were considered by Labour to be especially suitable for women, 'food, care and furnishing' were 'very feminine issues'.[36] Elizabeth McCombs declared after twenty years of work in politics that the whole premise of her activity had been 'to strengthen the institution of the home in our community'.[37] There had been some brief very faint stirrings of a more radical appraisal of the place and function of women in society within Christchurch Labour circles, just before the end of the war. But the initiative did not have a deep impact. G.H.J. Chapple was especially active, addressing women's groups, supported by the efforts of Ada Wells and Sarah Page. Chapple delivered a lecture criticising marriage: women were imprisoned within the relationship he declared, held in 'unequal status' and regarded as 'some kind of domestic animal'. Chapple believed that the hour of reckoning was approaching:

> ... after the war women would resist the right of male monopoly .... the rising demand for divorce was really a rising ideal for liberty, and that the door of marriage should be as easy to come out as to enter in. After the war, women will find they have a freer selection in love matters.[38]

Ada Wells and Sarah Page took the platform for the Labour Party along with Chapple, only a few months later. They did not further explore 'love matters' but they did put forward more potentially radical ideas about the role of women than had been widely heard in Labour circles

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34. Isabel Langford, op.cit., p.28
35. Ibid.
36. LT 28 Apr 1915, p.7, c.4
37. Isabel Langford, op.cit., p.81
38. MW 20 Mar 1918, p.7, c.4

before. They wanted the municipality used to reorganise family life: a scheme of municipal laundries, baths and kitchens throughout the city would free women from full-time housework. It was 'no more efficency for each household to cook its own dinner than it was for a man to make his boots' declared Sarah Page.[39] Ada Wells had tentatively suggested a 'motherhood wage'[40] for women; she now argued for a system of playgrounds and creches to do away with the need for a woman to be tied wholly to the home.[41]

These ideas and suggestions did not bear fruit; neither of the women was elected to the City Council and they were not given the chance to try and implement their schemes. The whole thrust of such arguments ran counter to the prevailing ethos within the Labour Party anyway, although by the end of the war, the party was worried about the rise of consciousness within the women's movement. At the Annual Conference of 1919, the issue of female delegates came up for discussion. The method of selecting delegates had almost completely excluded women and some men argued that special provision should be made to ensure that there would always be some women at Conference. Michael Joseph Savage thought the idea ridiculous - 'arguments in favour of sex representation could not be taken seriously'.[42] Others thought the matter far more serious. Fred Cooke declared that 'even for Socialist men and women ... it was no use some of the men declaring that they could represent women as well as the women themselves. They simply could not.'[43] There were further grounds for disquiet. The rise of a separate consciousness among women threatened the progress of Labour as a party appealing to both sexes. If nothing was done to give women a voice within the

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39. LT 17 Apr 1919, p.6, c.3-4
40. Ibid., p.6, c.2
41. Ibid.
42. MW 23 Jul 1919, p.5, c.2
43. Ibid.

party '... there would be a feminist movement in the Dominion'.[44] Women made up half the voters and if they came to perceive their interests in sectarian terms, they could withdraw their support from Labour.

Despite the evidence of the social conservatism of the bulk of the labour movement in Christchurch, opponents attributed to the party the attitudes and assumptions of a militant and radical minority. In their view Christchurch Labour exhibited the polarisation evident elsewhere in New Zealand. They believed that among local leaders, some were more extremist or dangerous than others. By the beginning of war, McCombs had been in Parliament for nearly a year and in spite of the fact that the daily papers still called him an 'extreme Labourite',[45] he had demonstrated to the satisfaction of most that he intended to work within the system rather than against it. Sullivan, still a political hopeful, was at the same time in 1914 President of the Federation of Labour. However, he was something of a favourite with Christchurch conservatives. Even the pro-Reform Press praised his 'mild-mannered speech'[46] and declared that he was an 'earnest young man with good qualities which we would be sorry to see extinguished by a Parliamentary career'.[47] On the other hand, Hiram Hunter was disliked and ranked with extremists from outside Christchurch: '... Messrs Semple and Parry ... appeared as the election agents of the "Labour Movement", with the Labour candidate for Christchurch East as their Servitor'.[48]

These differences in public image persisted throughout the war, and in 1919 Sullivan was still ranked as a moderate, along with Howard,

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44. MW 16 Jul 1919, p.5, c.2
45. LT 11 Dec 1914, p.6, c.1
46. P 22 Oct 1914, p.6, c.2
47. Ibid.
48. Ibid., 10 Nov 1914, p.6, c.2

while Hunter and Tim Armstrong were regarded as dangerous. The Lyttelton Times complained that the machinery of Labour Party selection and operation made it impossible to discriminate between the acceptable and the dangerous since 'the Hollands, the Semples, the Hunters, the Armstrongs' had control of the Howards and the Sullivans.[49] Harry Holland was especially suspect in the eyes of Christchurch conservatives and his leadership of the Parliamentary wing of the party was believed to damn the whole to 'a peculiar brand of labour politics expounded by ... Mr. H.E. Holland, the international Socialist'.[50]

Christchurch Labour leaders were aware of these differences in the public perception of individuals within their party. They never openly condemned any of those Labour figures commonly regarded as extremist, at times they leapt to their defence, always pointing out the essential sober-mindedness of the Labour movement. Howard in particular, complained of the way the local press syndicated an attack on figures like Harry Holland, Bob Semple and Peter Fraser. They were 'as clean'[51] as any Liberal, he exclaimed. However, the Christchurch Labour leaders were careful during the election campaigns of 1919 to demonstrate that they were not under the domination of these people from other centres who were still suspect in Christchurch. When Sullivan was challenged as to whether he would be a follower of Harry Holland in Parliament, he declared that if elected, it would be as a

> member of the Labour Party ... and not as a follower of Mr. Holland or any other leader. When the Labour Party meets after the election it will elect its leader. The choice may fall on Mr. Holland; it may not: there is every chance that the new member for Avon, Mr. D.G. Sullivan

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49. LT 28 Nov 1919, p.6, c.1-2
50. Ibid., 5 Dec 1919, p.6, c.1
51. Ibid., 26 Nov 1919, p.7, c.7

will be the leader.[52]

Although they skirted the problem in public with such half-facetious rejoinders, in private some labour leaders had more misgivings about the problems individuals like Holland, and their reputations, were saddling upon Labour. After the elections, J.T. Paul wrote to John McCullough who was an old friend. Paul had resigned his seat in the Legislative Council in order to contest the election and enter into the House of Representatives. This would have placed him in a better position to challenge Holland's leadership. However he failed to secure election. In early 1920, before the Parliamentary wing of the party had firmly reorganised, he expressed his fears to McCullough. 'I'm glad they didnt [sic] appoint Holland leader. I suppose they will, but if they do we will have a lot of weight to carry at the next election',[53] he wrote.

If it wanted to gain public confidence and secure political power, Christchurch Labour had to do much more than simply repudiate either the influence of alien socialist movements, or dimination by Labour leaders like Holland who still carried a burden of extremist taint. It had to put forward some positive image of itself, something believable and acceptable to most voters. The business of creating a political image and gaining public acceptance lay beyond the realm of policies and platforms. Ward, for instance, put forward one of the most radical programmes he had ever devised in 1919. On many points it offered just what Labour demanded; but it did the Liberals no good. They had lost credibility in the public mind. Workers in Christchurch were no longer prepared to vote for them - Henry Thacker was the only Liberal re-elected in a Christchurch working-class constituency and he

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52. S 5 Dec 1919, p.3, c.2

53. J.T. Paul - J.A. McCullough, 1 Feb 1920, J.A. McCullough papers

succeeded by virtue of a conjuring trick, making it very clear that he put great distance between himself and Ward's leadership.

The Labour Party had had what was essentially a problem of public relations, the party was not judged by policies alone. Its political image had to do as much with the public's perception of the party's credibility, respectability and the ethos it was thought to embody as with the concrete proposals it put forward. If the local Labour leaders did not want to espouse the theories and doctrines of Holland or the Bolsheviks, they had to put forward some kind of political philosophy of their own. This they did, although it was never formulated in detail, indeed hardly written down at all. It tended to be expressed in emotive phrases in campaign speeches rather than in measured, polished argument of formal theorising. Nevertheless, Labour's philosophy had a core of intention, an ideology that may have been rudimentary but which inspired those who believed in it. By 1919, this political philosophy was both millenial and practical. It drew upon ideas evolved overseas but at the same time was an eminently indigenous phenomenon.

Labour believed that it indeed was in the business of creating a millenium. It was about to usher in a new social order. Without spelling out the detail, the party was inspired by a visionary hope of 'higher, juster, more humanitarian type of society'.[54] This brave new world was egalitarian, but not one in which all would necessarily be equal. Labour wanted a social organisation such that it will be

> impossible for one man to exploit his fellows; a type of society in which it will be no fault of the social conditions if a man or woman fails to secure, [sic] a

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54. Dan Sullivan S 24 Oct 1919, p.3, c.1

comfortable and cultured existence. [55]

Under such conditions, people would be able to reach up and out to higher and better things. There was no hint of what Tommy Taylor had earlier called 'communism', the forcible levelling of the community down to some lowest common denominator. Labour would have agreed with Taylor that such an idea was 'wrong from its centre to its circumference'.[56] Labour did see itself as attacking privilege,[57] but the tenor of its rhetoric was to emphasise the building up of the mass of the people, rather than the pulling down of those at the top.

Labour's was essentially an optimistic vision: given the opportunity, people would struggle to fulfil their potential and in advancing themselves they would advance civilization. The millenium could be ushered in almost within a lifetime. Moreover, it could be done in a righteous and just fashion, through practical politics, on both national and local fronts. In local politics, Labour echoed the tradition of Taylor, who had declared that 'The municipality as an instrument of civilization is scarcely born yet'.[58] Taylor's faith remained strong within the Labour Party throughout the war. Labour councillors regularly harked back to his policies and justified their own with the argument that they had first been promoted by Taylor.[59] All politics could be a route to social change. Practical political programmes could indeed bring about 'better social conditions and a general happier state of affairs'.[60] Morgan Williams, the Labour candidate for Kaiapoi in 1919, summed up the aspiration when he declared

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55. S 24 Oct 1919, p.7, c.6
56. C.F. Billcliff, op.cit., p.80
57. James McCombs LT 1 Mar 1919, p.9, c.2
58. Jessie Macleod, op.cit., p.97
59. Eg. James McCombs LT 29 Apr 1919, p.8, c.3; Hiram Hunter, Ibid., 7 Mar 1918, p.5, c.1
60. LT 20 Nov 1919, p.7, c.8

that if Labour combined in an endeavour by scientific thought

> to improve the political and social conditions, it would succeed in reaching a social state where there would be no idlers, no drudges and no poverty .[61]

However, the party was convinced that policies alone were not sufficient to bring about such a social transformation; the motivation had to be sufficently pure. The underlying aspiration and intention of the party in government was crucial. There was no point expecting progressive legislation unless there was a sympathetic and progressive government to administer it, McCombs pointed out.[62] The Liberals were the case in question. They 'lacked sincerity'[63] and were in fact the mere shadow of Labour's substance, he claimed. In contrast, Labour had a solid, moral foundation for its political platform. The party did not desire power for its own sake - it had an 'ethical basis of social service'.[64] Service, not profit or self-advancement must be the key-note of politics. This, as much as Fabian schemes of 'Municipal Socialism', inspired Labour's involvement in the work of the City Council.[65]

Furthermore, by the end of the war, this political ideal of social service being promulgated by the party was beginning to attract many from within the churches. The agitation for prohibition had already forged some links between Church and Labour and built up some goodwill, but during 1919, the party in Christchurch began to feel that sentiment within the churches was moving ever more strongly in its favour. McCombs declared that it was 'pleasing to notice'[66] the tone of the sermons on Labour Sunday. Some churchmen had criticised the form of the labour

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61. LT 17 Oct 1919, p.2, c.8
62. Ibid., 7 Nov 1919, p.7, c.7
63. Ibid., 26 Aug 1919, p.7, c.6
64. Ibid., 18 Nov 1919, p.7, c.6
65. Eg. see Isabel Langford, op.cit., p.33-9 re Elizabeth McCombs.
66. LT 18 Nov 1919, p.7, c.6

movement's politics, or specific aspects of it, but most had preached the need for harmony between the church and Labour.[67] None had unreservedly attacked Labour, a few had unreservedly praised it. One Presbyterian minister told his congregation that the 'central foundation' of the labour movement was belief in the value of man.[68] The National Council of Churches had begun earlier to take a lively interest in the labour movement and had approached the TLC for a speaker to address it on the aims of Labour.[69] When the Council members debated among themselves, one minister declared that the 'present Labour movement is nothing more than a legitimate desire to enjoy a fuller and better life. Why should the Church hesitate?'[70] The Anglican Synod set up a Social Service Board, whose recommendations gave the Labour Party pleasure. 'The references to the Labour Party were most encouraging', declared McCombs.[71] Sullivan spoke of the 'advance of the churches ... towards the Labour ideal ....'[72] He was especially pleased by developments within the Anglican and Baptist churches, where 'the position of workers in relation to social conditions was sympathetically discussed, some pronouncements being even revolutionary in tone.'[73]

Only one clergyman, G.H.J. Chapple, actually stood as a Labour candidate during this period, although another, J.K. Archer, was active on the hustings.[74] L.G. Whitehead, an Anglican minister who had been associated with the movement for workers' education, also came out strongly for the Labour Party. Christianity 'enjoined' its ministers

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67. Eg. see LT 27 Oct 1919, p.7, c.6
68. Ibid., Rev. R.M. Ryburn, St. Andrews Presbyterian Church
69. T.L.C. Minutes 29 Mar 1919
70. LT 20 May 1919, p.6, c.4,5
71. Ibid., 18 Nov 1919, p.7, c.6
72. S 24 Oct 1919, p.3, c.1
73. Ibid.
74. Eg. LT 29 Apr 1919, p.8, c.3, chaired meeting for James McCombs

to co-operate with Labour, he claimed.[75] A number of prominent figures within the Labour Party declared that for its part, the aims of Labour were identical with those of the church. Chapple gave a series of lectures on the Church and Labour. On one occasion he argued that 'the mother of Jesus was a Bolshevist'.[76] In his political campaigning however, Chapple usually limited himself to advocating the 'modern trend' in politics - a 'fatherly tending'[77] of the welfare of the people. At the same time, Ada Wells was much more outspoken in her belief that the aims of Church and Labour were in fact identical. 'The ideals propounded by Christ were the ideals of the Labour Party',[78] she told audiences during her campaign for the municipal elections early in 1919. Later in the year, during the general elections, other Labour candidates made similar statements. John Robertson, contesting Riccarton, declared that 'anyone who studied addresses by prominent clergymen would realise that the ideals of Church and Labour were very much akin, but expressed in different ways'.[79]

The ethic of social service implied that there would be no immorality in Labour's methods of proceeding to its goal of the reconstruction of society - it ruled out unjust appropriations or expropriations of property. Labour wanted to advance mankind, but it was convinced that it could be done in a righteous fashion, by democratic means.

The commitment to democracy can be seen in Labour's dedication to electoral reform, particularly proportional representation. Christchurch Labour leaders remained wedded to this measure in spite of

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75. LT 24 Mar 1919, p.5, c.8. Cf. Barry Gustafson, op.cit., (p.232) claims the Anglican and Presbyterian Churches were either unfriendly or hostile to Labour.
76. MW 2 Jul 1919, p.4, c.6
77. LT 17 Apr 1919, p.6, c.4
78. Ibid., p.6, c.3
79. Ibid., 29 Oct 1919, p.7, c.1

the fact that the municipal elections of 1917 had demonstrated that proportional representation did not necessarily work in their favour. In itself this demonstrated the nature of their commitment. They wanted this reform primarily because they believed it just. No doubt they did believe that a fairer method of representation would ultimately give them more representation, but this was not their reason for advocating it. McCombs declared that the people of the country should have as perfect a control of legislation as possible;[80] government should be 'an exact reflex of public opinion in all its shades'.[81] He went on to point out that the very fact Labour was wedded to electoral reform demonstrated that it was not out for the destruction of all government - like the anarchist.[82] Sullivan elaborated the arguement, claiming that Labour's stance highlighted the difference between it and the Russian Bolsheviks. Bolshevism stood '"willy-nilly" for the "Dictatorship of the proletariat" i.e. for domination by the working class': anyone other than workers were denied a voice in government. Sullivan continued:

> Now the New Zealand Labour Party is a supporter of proportional representation, a measure which, as has so often been explained, is designed to secure the representation of each group or party in accordance with its numerical strength. Bolsheviks, Sparticists, direct actionists, and all the extreme left-wingers of the working-class movement the world over, reject it.

To them, it was an 'anathema', but it was a central plank of the NZLP:

> Does this not demonstrate that the Labour Party is a party that proceeds on purely constitutional lines, and that it seeks to attain power only on the

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80. LT 18 Nov 1919, p.7, c.6
81. Ibid., p.8, c.1
82. Ibid., p.7, c.1

solid basis of winning public approval for its policy? [83]

Thus, by 1919, the Labour Party leaders in Christchurch stood firmly committed to working within the status quo to achieve the new utopia. They declared it possible to accomplish their lofty purpose if the party was a benevolent and altruistic agent of politics: motivated by the ethic of social service, Labour would secure its goal.

Social service was not socialism, yet the party objective remained the 'nationalization of the means of production, distribution and exchange'. Labour repudiated the tactics of the Bolsheviks and direct actionists. It had enquired into some formal theory, particularly the British school of guild socialism, but that had been laid aside by the end of 1919. The party had put forward some ideas about what it believed should be the nature of politics and society, but this left largely unexamined the matter of Labour's precise relationship and attitude to socialism and other socialist movements of the day.

Socialism was not a new idea to those interested in radical and left-wing politics in Christchurch. There had been several decades of polemic by the time the war broke out in 1914 and most of the leading figures in the Labour Party had been interested and involved at some time. Since at least the end of the nineteenth century there had been numerous small, informal study groups eagerly devouring socialist writings. Elizabeth McCombs had belonged to one in her youth. Her group grew so her sister recalls, from a chance encounter:

> We met a young couple who had been members of the British Socialist Party. They were keen on sharing their views ... we ... formed a little Socialist Club - very select, with about twelve members. Here we subscribed to the English Socialist paper, The Clarion ...

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83. S 23 Aug 1919, p.7, c.7

and Mrs. McCombs studied socialist principles ....[84]

Others studied socialism more formally. Harry Atkinson was active with his Socialist Church, founded in 1896, attracting and interesting men who later rose to prominence within the Labour Party - James McCombs, John McCullough and James Thorn, for instance. Atkinson believed that he should concentrate upon educational propaganda rather than electoral activity[85] which he considered premature in New Zealand, but the discussions within the Church tended nevertheless to be about local, pragmatic issues like possible programmes for municipal bodies or strategies for socialists if they were elected to power in local government.[86]

The Socialist Church was one of the first in a long and important line of Christian Socialist organisations in Christchurch. Although the Church had few of the trappings of religion, the singing of hymns was about the only exception, Atkinson's socialism was imbued with a religious conviction. He believed

> ... that in itself the effort for betterment in the labour movement was religious ... the movement was deeply and in a very real sense religious ... I plunged for the term Socialist. The word "church" was not added, it was fundamental as embodying a religious ideal ....[87]

Atkinson did 'not pretend to satisfy the whole religious wants of any person', but he did believe that his principles were such as 'should form an integral part of every man's Religion [sic]'.[88] In line with the pragmatic emphasis of the Socialist Church educational propaganda, Atkinson declared that his intention was to 'bring a practical

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84. Isabel Langford, op.cit., p.16
85. H.O. Roth, 'The Labour Churches' op.cit., p.365
86. Ibid.
87. Ibid., p.26
88. 'The Socialist Church' Monthly Leaflet No. 1 Feb 1897. J.A. McCullough papers.

every day religion into the lives of the people'.[89]

At the same time, the vision of the Socialist Church was millenial. It was working to bring about a society 'organised on a basis of Brotherhood and Equality'[90] but this millenial vision cloaked the fact that the precise formulation of what was meant by socialism had been left vague. 'What is socialism?' asked Harry Atkinson. '...Socialism is simply a higher state of civilisation. It is system and peace in industry, commerce and trade.'[91] Because it did not believe its function was to 'haggle over knotty points of theology or metaphysics'[92] members of the Socialist Church did not work out a detailed critique of society; they did not look at the way it functioned as a system, distributing economic, political and social power. They did not give great thought to the means whereby socialism, the 'higher state of civilisation' was to come about. When they did give the matter some consideration, the locus of change was placed within the individual: ' ... only as we learn to lead purer and better lives can we benefit by any other measures of social Reform [sic]'.[93] However, they were adamant that it would come 'without bloodshed, robbery, confiscation, or any other immoral means ....'[94]

The Socialist Church was defunct by 1905. Its successor, the Fabian Society, was more consistently interested in theory. Eveline Cunnington, as the Society's foremost propagandist, grappled with the ideas of Marx and Engels. The Christchurch Fabians went along with the call for the complete reconstruction of society -

We resist and repudiate all attempts at remedial measures

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89. 'The Socialist Church' Monthly Leaflet No. 1 February 1897. J.A. McCullough papers.
90. Ibid.
91. Ibid.
92. Ibid.
93. Ibid.
94. Ibid.

of law and legislation.

> We demand complete change in the whole social structure ....[95]

wrote Cunnington, but she rejected the belief that everything would flow from an economic reconstruction. That theory of Marx and Engels had been a great discovery, 'but it was only a partial discovery, when they gave the world the theory of economic interpretation ... it is too simple to be complete.'[96] The Fabians believed that:

> Man had been impelled by other and subtler forces than the economic one alone. He has not progressed by revolutionary jerks only, but by the slow, root-fed, evolutionary processes also ... search for those subtler forces. They are to be found in art, painting, music, religion, nature.[97]

There was a certain inevitability about the coming of the socialist order. By the outbreak of war in 1914, the Fabians had explicitly distanced themselves from the works of Marx:

> There are no approved works of Socialism to be accepted in their entirety by all Socialists,

they declared

> modern Socialism does not bind itself to all that Karl Marx has written. It knows to-day that his theories ... all need considerable modification and reconstruction.[98]

Like its predecessor the Socialist Church, the Fabians were Christian Socialists but their definition of what socialism meant - the 'small packet of words that you can learn by heart and repeat afterwards to your friends'[99] - was somewhat more specific than the vague 'higher state' offered earlier by Harry Atkinson. Eveline Cunnington wrote that

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95. E.W. Cunnington, Letters, p.13
96. Ibid., p.17
97. Ibid.
98. E.W. Cunnington, 'The Archbishop and Socialism', p.3-4
99. E.W. Cunnington, Letters, p.28

socialism was a 'well-thought out plan' for securing a more 'sensible - more just - far happier social order'[100] to be achieved through a 'complete change' in the management of the nation's land and capital, which would be owned by the whole community, not the 'most unjustly privileged few'.[101] The Fabians believed that this in essence was the 'economic interpretation of the teaching of Christ; for it is founded on the supreme principle "Do unto others as ye would they should do unto you"'.[102] The principles of the other pre-war Christian Socialist group active in Christchurch, the Anglican-dominated Church Socialist League, were very similar to those expressed by the Fabians - who indeed used the arguments of the clergymen to support their own. The League declared its aims to be

> The political, economic and social emancipation of the whole of the people, men and women, by the establishment of a democratic commonwealth, in which the community shall own the land and capital collectively, and use them co-operatively for the good of all.[103]

The similarity in the principles of these two organisations was hardly surprising. Eveline Cunnington was a leading figure in both.

In Christchurch the Christian Socialist organisations tended to draw their support from the middle class; most of the members were at least well-educated if not themselves wealthy.[104] The working class organisations at the time tended to be 'labour' rather than socialist in orientation. They were split by a difference of opinion about industrial arbitration rather than political theory. Eveline Cunnington and the Fabians certainly felt more sympathy for the protege of the Trades and Labour Councils, the United Labour Party, 'led by a very nice and brilliant

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100. E.W. Cunnington, Letters, p.28
101. Ibid.
102. E.W. Cunnington, 'The Archbishop and Socialism', p.4
103. E.W. Cunnington, Letters, p.28
104. See chapter VI, p.211

man, Professor M., an American'[105] who held by arbitration 'and the right machinery for relieving Labour troubles'.[106] The Socialist Party, or the Revolutionary Socialist League as it was sometimes known locally,[107] was considered to be in the wrong by the Christian Socialists; 'the real evil'[108] lay with them in dividing the workers. Eveline Cunnington believed the Socialist Party to be composed of 'extreme Socialists ... no doubt believers in strikes'[109] but in fact the Socialist Party functioning in Christchurch was the most pragmatic and least doctrinnaire of all the party branches in the country. The NZSP had always done best in New Zealand when it had put pragmatism first. The party had made big strides in the early years of the century under the leadership of Tom Mann, the British socialist, with his policy of opting for 'measures, not men or parties'.[110] After his departure from the country, the party fell under the control of a group of idealogues based in Wellington. Membership dropped dramatically. The Christchurch branch was revitalised under the local control of Fred Cooke and Ted Howard, who in 1911 succeeded in securing control of the national party organisation.[111] Christchurch Socialists were pragmatic; they were ready to co-operate with the Trades and Labour Council - in 1909 Ted Howard was President of the TLC and both he and Cooke had been active within the Council for a number of years.[112] In the struggles within the New Zealand Socialist Party, the Christchurch Branch invariably pressed for more effort to be directed into politics with the intention of securing immediate reforms.

> ... we believe in fighting for the attainment of

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105. E.W. Cunnington, Letters, p. 134-5
106. Ibid.,
107. Ibid., p.22
108. Ibid., p.135
109. Ibid., p.134
110. Valerie Smith, op.cit., p.47
111. H.O. Roth 'The New Zealand Socialist Party' op.cit., p.57
112. T.L.C. Annual Reports, 1904-11

> immediate aims, for the enforcement of the momentary interests of the working class, and in the bitter struggle of the present take care of the future. [113]

Nevertheless, although this may have been a soft line within the NZSP, the 'bitter struggle' was still a marked contrast to the hopes of the Fabians, with their trust in the inevitable and righteous rise of socialism:

> ... the progress of humanity towards Socialism is the result and outcome of the great thoughts, sown through historic ages .... From Greek philosophers, from early Christian Saints, from medieval rebels, from French and German agnostics, from Italian patriots - all, all bring something positive and good and beautiful to help build the noble edifice of Socialism. [114]

This difference, however, was as much one of political style as political substance. The two organisations had a quite different tone of public address. The Socialist Party orators throve on vehement rhetoric. They expressed a sense of outrage and passionate commitment. Their lives as workers were hard and the socialist order promised so much, their sense of urgency was consequently bound to show. Longing emerged as vehemence and passion. Even in their correspondence the Socialists offered reassurance to each other that they were in fact at the centre of events and that their activity was having some impact - they signed their letters 'yours in revolt ....'[115] On the other hand, the Fabians were restrained. From the material comfort of their middle-class lives, they were better able to counsel restraint. The tempo of their argument was measured and stress was laid upon the logic and inevitability of their convictions.

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113. H.O. Roth, 'The New Zealand Socialist Party' op.cit., p.55
114. E.W. Cunnington, Letters, p.24
115. Eg. S. Kingsford - H.L. Basher 24 May 1910, Socialist Party Records.

Where Ted Howard called for action, Eveline Cunnington habitually addressed her 'dear, thoughtful reader'.[116]

Moreover, what ideological or theoretical differences did exist, were not of a very ancient date. People were prone to change their convictions, even leading figures switched sides. In 1912, Ted Howard was President of the New Zealand Socialist Party and declared his 'determined purpose'[117] to overthrow capitalism, yet only a few years earlier he had been amongst the most conservative of labour figures. At Trades and Labour Council Conference he had voted against the motion to include in the platform of a political Labour party the demand for the 'nationalisation of the means of production, distribution and exchange'.[118] At the time of the Unity Conference, Howard declared that he would 'never compromise' with a political party that did not insist on the 'complete overthrow of the present system':[119] eighteen months later, he was hard at work on the hustings for James McCombs as a representative of the SDP. His attitude to the churches was equally ambivalent. Howard had been raised in the Church of England and by his own account had been a 'dear little choir boy' but had turned away from religion when he saw that the churches were preaching 'as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be'[120] for the workers. During the war, however, he turned again to religion and became closely involved with Chapple and the Socialist Sunday school.

Ideological differences were thus neither deep-seated nor insurmountable within the left-wing and radical community in Christchurch before 1914. Moreover, it was an intimate political scene, personal contacts between leading figures on opposite sides of the political divide were nevertheless frequently very cordial. Ted Howard publicly

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116. Eg. E.W. Cunnington, Letters, p.29
117. Barry S. Gustafson, op.cit., p.75
118. Ibid., p.13
119. Ibid., p.68
120. MW 6 Feb 1918, p.5, c.6

praised leading Fabian and Church Socialist figures; in private, Eveline Cunnington referred to the workers, even when acting in their most reprehensible fashion, as 'poor dears'.[121] There was a great deal of face-to-face contact and almost all the leading characters knew each other well, even if they had their disagreements. Furthermore, it was not politics on a central stage, there was little likelihood of any of the pre-war socialist factions achieving political power and the struggles between them therefore lacked the bitter edge that they might have had if the stakes had been higher.

There never existed in Christchurch any consistent, doctrinnaire or wide-spread commitment to Marxism. The Fabians had publicly repudiated Marx, the Socialist Party was eminently pragmatic and vague Christian Socialist ideas were pervasive. Marx was never widely read within the labour movement. In reply to the enquiries of overseas investigators, labour leaders declared Marx had no influence. Indeed he was virtually unknown.[122]

Most of those who rose to prominence in Christchurch had a very sketchy knowledge of the body of socialist theory as a whole and even less of Marx in particular. James McCombs was the first local man elected to Parlaiment from an avowedly labour political organisation. He was easily its pre-eminent figure in Christchurch during the early part of the war. Yet he was familiar with few of the recognised socialist writers of his day. He certainly never read Marx.[123] His wife Elizabeth, had been perhaps a more systemmatic student of socialist dogma, but she had studied the seminal works only indirectly through popular socialist periodicals. This seems to have been a very common way for labour men and women to educate themselves in political ideas; throughout the war

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121. E.W. Cunnington, Letters, p.131
122. H.O. Roth, 'The New Zealand Socialist Party' op.cit., p.54
123. Interview, Sir Terence McCombs, 12 Dec 1978

Sullivan wrote at length about socialism in his newspaper column, but almost without exception he quoted and discussed writers and commentators from other magazines not the originals themselves. New developments tended to percolate slowly into the country. Locals kept abreast with events in the United Kingdom, but when there was a language barrier, the time delay was great. None of Lenin's writings or pamphlets reached New Zealand during the war, the first translation of a pamphlet was released in limited numbers in August 1919.[124] The haziness of New Zealanders comprehension of developments within international socialist movements was not helped by the paucity in the availability of up to date information.

However, if there existed little deep understanding of theory, there was a widespread familiarity with many of the terms, phrases and symbols of socialism. They were used as catch-cries and rallying points in the general political debate. For many in the labour movement, the outward signs of a socialist commitment were cherished; the words, songs and symbols evoked a deep response since they conveyed a sense of being part of a world-wide movement and gave a deeper validity to the local agitation. Many of the old campaigners clung to them throughout their lives. During the First World War, the Christchurch Labour leaders freely used socialist jargon. James McCombs spoke of Labour election campaigns 'in which the Red Flag had been carried to victory'.[125] They all spoke of the 'class struggle', fighting for the 'masses' and the 'working class' and they defended Labour's ultimate aim of the 'nationalization of the means of production distribution and exchange.'

However, these terms did not necessarily mean in Christchurch what they meant elsewhere in the world, or even elsewhere in New Zealand.

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124. H.O. Roth 'The October Revolution and New Zealand Labour' p.51-2

125. Eg. LT 10 Oct 1918, p.4, c.3

Labour leaders like McCombs, Sullivan and Howard often gave their socialist rhetoric an idiosyncratic meaning; they defined their own terms. McCombs upheld Labour's aim of nationalisation and the 'class struggle'. But he declared that the objective could be reached in 'an orderly and constitutional manner'[126] without the need for unjust expropriation. In the transition, there might be strikes and lock-outs, but these were a symptom of the disorder that society was suffering - the 'disease social injustice and social sin'.[127] This was not a cry to rally to Marx and the class war; it was more an echo of Atkinson and his commitment to no 'bloodshed, robbery, confiscation, or ... other immoral means ....'

Sullivan explained what he meant by the nationalisation of industry. It was the reorganisation 'on the lines of giving men engaged in an industry a share in saying how that industry should be conducted'.[128] This, declared Sullivan, was Labour's intent and meaning; his personal predilection for guild socialism was still evident. However, Sullivan never stressed theory above harmony. He willingly laid aside guild socialism rather than have it develop as a point of friction. Sullivan was always prepared to discuss both the pros and the cons of socialism. Indeed, he prided himself on not being doctrinnaire. While he lined himself up as basically standing on the socialist side of the political debate, Sullivan declared that he was 'not a good partisan, for I am too much given to looking at both sides of the pricture presented to me for that'.[129] His explanations of what socialism was all about similarly stressed reconciliation, even compromise. He enlisted Karl Marx on his side. In the Communist Manifesto, wrote Sullivan, Marx had 'proclaimed the idea of a Labour Party independent of all other political parties'.

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126. LT 18 Nov 1919, p.7, c.8
127. Ibid.
128. Ibid., 20 Nov 1919, p.7, c.8
129. S 19 Jan 1915, p.11, c.1

This sparked a response which led to the foundation of the Communist Alliance, an organisation of political activists who sought to establish the new order. However Marx withdrew from this Alliance, Sullivan believed, driven out by the doctrines of 'violence and insurrection' advocated by some. Sullivan declared that Marx himself wanted a 'social political and educational organisation destined to weld the working class of all nations into a single federated society.'[130] Sullivan believed that the socialism that had drown up in the name of Marx had many faults; a 'critical examination' of it as it was now practised 'reveals defects that are only outweighed by the untoward results achieved by Capitalism ....'[131]

Sullivan did not want theory to interfere with either the harmony established within the Labour Party, or with its perceptable advances in popularity with the people. He was ready to accept that compromise would be made all along the way

> ... in my judgement, society will eventually arrive at a solution that will embody the best features of both the present system and Socialism [sic].[132]

When theories did threaten Labour success, he wanted them jettisoned:

> We have neither the time nor the desire to debate the subject [i.e. Bolshevism]. Neither have we time for hair-splitting about the merits of Socialism [sic].... Let us do the things that are nearest, and the work that lies to hand just now ....[133]

However this anti-intellectual, anti-theoretical strand within the Christchurch Labour Party should not be equated with political opportunism or simple power seeking. The party leaders did believe that they were

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130. S 12 Jan 1918, p.7, c.1
131. Ibid., 19 Jan 1915, p.11, c.1
132. Ibid., p. 11, c.3
133. Ibid., 26 Jul 1919, p.6, c.2

leading the struggle of the working class in politics, but they knew that struggle was not class war. Some of them would have liked it otherwise. Howard declared in a moment of open frustration that the workers of New Zealand were 'so patient and docile, or so damnably self complacent, that such a thing as class war does not exist'.[134]

However, most of the Christchurch Labour leaders were content with politics as they were. They rejected the strategies of the 'extreme left-wingers', but they stood firmly beside two measures that might be called socialist: collective action and state control. They wanted to marshal and organise the collective power of the state and the people for the benefit of all. 'Essentially', declared Sullivan, 'Labour stands for collectivism as opposed to individualism ....'[135] It was the Labour claim that 'collectivism is the idea of the future.'[136] In itself, collective action was believed to be beneficial:

> out of co-operation in producing and sharing the physical needs of life there will develop co-operation of feeling also; a greater sympathy between man and man than was ever possible under a competitive system.[137]

Labour believed that the war was assisting the spread and acceptance of its ideas on collective action. State power had been mobilized as never before in an effort to push production for war. On all sides ordinary people could see evidence of the way the state could organise. Dan Sullivan claimed that 'acceptance of socialist thought' could be seen within the community, evidenced 'in an approval of the extension of state functions ....'[138] He declared that 'In any case, collectivism

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134. MW 27 Mar 1918, p.5, c.6
135. S 1 May 1919, p.5, c.1
136. Ibid.
137. Ibid.
138. Ibid., 6 Jan 1917, p.12, c.1-2

was bound to have come of course, but its progress has been tremendously accelerated by the war.'[139] The faith of Eveline Cunnington and the Fabians in the inevitable evolution of socialism was still evident.

Collective action and increased state functions were very much twin concepts in the mind of Labour; indeed they were regarded by many as synonymous. Sullivan suggested as much when he wrote that the crisis of the war had 'proved the superior efficiency of the organised state over individualistic effort' and thus 'permanently proved' the superiority of collective action. Such calls for increased function by the state were scarcely new. Indeed, state activity was a tradition in New Zealand politics. Sir Robert Stout, the Chief Justice and a former premier of the country, wrote approvingly several years before the war, that the 'extension of the functions of the State in New Zealand has perhaps gone further than in any other British territory.'[140] He dated government activity in development and public works from at least the late 1860s. Social experimentation he declared to have begun with responsible government.[141] Even in 1911, Stout believed that New Zealanders wanted the 'great organisation of the State ... used to give an equal chance to all.' State control was better than existing as 'the slaves of monopolising companies ... or ... all-powerful trusts!'[142]

Stout may have dated the beginning of state enterprise from the birth of the colony, but Christchurch Labour dated it from the time of the early Liberal Party. In retrospect, they sanctified the era of Ballance and Seddon as a time when government had been innovative and benevolent. There had been advanced labour legislation. William Pember Reeves had been made the first Minister of Labour in the British Empire

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139. S 1 May 1919, p.5, c.1
140. Robert Stout and J. Logan Stout New Zealand Cambridge University Press, 1911, p.128
141. Ibid., p.125
142. Ibid., p.177

in 1890. There had been measures of electoral reform, notably female franchise had been granted, and trend-setting social legislation. Most particularly, old age pensions had endeared the Premier, Seddon, to the memory of the people. By comparison, the period following Seddon's death in 1906 was depicted as a desert of apathy and ineptitude in government. Labour did not forget that Ward had declared a 'legislative rest'.[143] By the end of World War I, Christchurch Labour was firmly of the opinion that

> No social progress has been made in this country during recent years; we as a nation have fallen behind ... We who, under Seddon and Ballance were in the van ... are now well in the rear ....[144]

From the earliest days of its attempts at organisation, Christchurch labour portrayed itself as carrying on the innovation of the early Liberals. In 1912 John McCullough wrote that:

> The G.L.P. [Great Liberal Party] has gone - never to rise again. In its place is going to spring the United Labour Party: who [sic] will continue the good work so ably began [sic] by John Ballance; continued by Seddon, & neglected so sadly by Ward ....[145]

The war was going to alert the people to the message of Labour in the twentieth century, as the industrial upheavals had done for the Liberal Party of John Ballance. Sullivan declared that 'the war will in short ultimately do for social progress what the Maritime Strike did in 1890.'[146]

McCombs was the first candidate for Parliament put up by the party in Christchurch. He stood in the by-election which followed the death of the Liberal MP for Lyttelton, James Laurenson. The campaign

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143. Eg. James McCombs, LT 18 Nov 1919, p.7, c.1
144. Dan Sullivan S 20 Jul 1918, p.5, c.1
145. J.A. McCullough - Sydney Smith 31 May 1912, J.A. McCullogh Papers.
146. S 19 Dec 1916, p.3, c.3

took place during the nation-wide waterfront dispute, one of the most bitter industrial upheavals of the twentieth century in New Zealand. In some centres, labour leaders spoke passionately and were arrested for sedition. In Wellington, the military was brought in against the strikers. Harry Holland declared that in its 'BITTER HATRED OF THE WORKERS', the government had lost all control; he believed that the 'RED HELL OF REVOLUTION' was about to break over the land.[147] In Lyttelton also, passions ran high. James McCombs had to be given a cordon of regular police, so great was the enmity and threat towards him by the specials.[148] In Christchurch city, more than eight thousand people attended the protest meeting organised by McCombs and the Strike Committee.[149]

At such a time and in such an electorate, it might have been expected that political labour would be bitter and that the campaign rhetoric would be permeated with the passion of class hatred, if not class-war doctrines. Such was not the case. James McCombs was personally anxious to dampen violent feelings; he organised a camp for watersiders on his property in Christchurch.[150] There the men were kept amused and away from the Port, where violence was more likely to erupt. McCombs was always in favour of moderation for the New Zealand Labour movement. He later confided to his son that he had entered the Labour Party in order to keep it on a moderate course; as a moderate within a radical movement, he believed he had more chance of influencing the destiny of the country than as a radical within a conservative movement[151] - as the Liberal Party had become under Ward. However, more was at work within the Christchurch SDP in 1913 than McCombs' personal influence. Afterall, he was not chosen

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147. W.D. McIntyre and W.J. Gardner, op.cit., p.230-1
148. Interview with Sir Terence McCombs 12 Dec 1978
149. LT 21 Nov 1913, p.9, c.7
150. Interview with Sir Terence McCombs 12 Dec 1978
151. Ibid.

as the party's candidate until quite late in the campaign,[152] and then was not without rivals. Moreover, he was supported on the hustings by a wide range of local and national SDP leaders, representing both militant and moderate organisations. Nevertheless the whole party concentrated on a campaign of moderation. The SDP put itself firmly into the mainstream of the Liberal tradition.

The campaign for the SDP was opened by 'Professor' Walter Mills, then the party's National Organiser. Mills eulogised the late Liberal member James Laurenson, and stressed the similarity between his politics and the politics of the SDP. Mills in fact claimed the active support of the dead man. Laurenson had 'supported the party during his lifetime' he declared.[153]

In his own speeches, McCombs stressed his record of work within the most progressive wing of the Liberal Party when it had been under the control of Seddon. McCombs had been active in the Progressive Liberal Association, an organisation established by Harry Ell the MP for Christchurch South. In 1913, McCombs made much of this, and of his work in ensuring that Seddon was kept up to his promises about old age pensions.[154] James McCombs had stood twice before as a candidate for Parliament, neither time as an endorsed Liberal, although claiming to be an 'out-and-out Radical ... devoted to the furtherance of true Progressive Liberalism'.[155] In 1913 he vigorously attacked the Liberal Party under Ward, which had decided to 'rest on its oars'.[156] There has been earlier attempts to rejuvenate the Liberals, he told electors. One such attempt had been the move to form the New Liberal Party, with which both Tommy Taylor and James Laurenson had been associated. The

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152. LT 29 Nov 1913, p.13, c.5
153. MW 24 Dec 1913, p.5, c.2
154. LT 2 Dec 1913, p.9, c.4
155. Campaign Leaflet, possession Sir Terence McCombs
156. LT 2 Dec 1913, p.9, c.4

time had not then been right, but the situation was now different declared McCombs; the moment was opportune and the agent of revitalisation was at hand in the form of the Social Democratic Party.[157]

If the initiative to form the SDP at the beginning of 1913 had come initially from the militants within the New Zealand labour movement, by the end of the year, James McCombs and the rest of the party in Christchurch were claiming a very moderate line of descent.

However, it was a claim that political labour in Christchurch continued to reiterate throughout the war, with persistence and growing credibility. Tommy Taylor was claimed as a forebear, along with the early Liberals. The SDP regarded him as 'The First Labour Mayor'[158] of Christchurch. Taylor had actually joined none of the labour parties that had sprung into existence during his lifetime. He found the intrigue of party politics distasteful, but towards the end of his life he was moving closer to accepting both the idea of a labour party, and involvement in it. He told Hiram Hunter that a labour party in Parliament was a necessity and declared 'I hope the movement may flourish'.[159] Like Labour, Taylor believed the Liberals had decayed; in 1890 'the Liberal Party in the country was a real force'[160] but by the twentieth century it lacked policy or programme. It should be born again or buried; he favoured burial.[161] Tommy Taylor died before the establishment of the Social Democratic Party but his wife Elizabeth Taylor, took a leading part in the early days of the local SDP. She became President of a short-lived Women's Social Democratic Committee and undertook much of the work of the organisation of publicity in McCombs' campaign of 1913.[162] During the

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157. LT 2 Dec 1913, p.9, c.4
158. Social Democratic Press 25 Apr 1913, Howard papers MS 980/74
159. Jessie Macleod, op.cit., p.116
160. Charles F. Billcliff, op.cit., p.55
161. Jessie Macleod, op.cit., p.134
162. LT 29 Nov 1913, p.13, c.5

war she chaired several meetings for Sullivan[163] and remained intimately connected with the Labour Party for many years, if behind the scenes.[164]

In order to get a good hearing for its own case, Christchurch Labour put itself in touch with these heroes of the working class. It depicted itself as the legitimate heir of Ballance and Seddon. Only by voting Labour, declared McCombs, would the 'ideals promulgated by the great Liberal leaders of the part ... ever be realised.'[165] To legitimate their descent, Labour determined to discredit the contemporary Liberals under Ward. The 'last good Liberal died when Mr. Seddon died ...'[166] said Howard. It was Labour's business 'to see to it that the Liberals shoulder their own liabilities'[167] resolved Sullivan. With one hand they grasped the fringe of the cloak and with the other stripped it from the shoulders of Ward. By the end of 1919, Christchurch Labour was in possession; the Liberal mantle fitted snugly round the form of Labour.

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163. Eg. LT 7 Dec 1914, p.2, c.5
164. Interview with Sir Terence McCombs 12 Dec 1978
165. LT 19 Mar 1917, p.5, c.5
166. Ibid., 2 Jul 1915, p.9, c.1
167. S 13 Sep 1919, p.5, c.1

CONCLUSION:

LABOUR AND CLASS

The issues thrown up by the war forced political maturity upon the political labour movement in Christchurch. In grappling with contentious issues in the hot-house atmosphere of 1914-18, Labour was taught a number of valuable political lessons. The financial management of the war and the continuing escalation in the cost of living thoroughly discredited the Liberals, who were Labour's chief opponents in Christchurch. This presented the party with unprecedented political opportunity. Labour's sympathy for prohibition helped sustain and forge links with the churches. The debate about conscription drew pacifists, feminists and radical anti-militarists into the local labour organisation. Each made a contribution to the evolving character of the Labour Party. At the same time, however, the divisiveness of these issues and the political infighting that they engendered, forced the party to learn tolerance and to take a firm view of the political perspective. In the aftermath of James McCombs' stand for prohibition, Christchurch Labour leaders realised that their power within the NZLP was strictly limited. The backlash to the conscription-repeal platform secured by the anti-militarists in 1917, confirmed their resolve never to again allow pressure groups to gain control of policy. As Dan Sullivan declared, a 'Labour Party should be a Labour Party ... not a conglomeration of every fad organisation'.[1] Anti-militarism and prohibition were at heart extraneous issues. Both had to be laid aside. Individuals within the Labour Party might hold such views, but they were not essentially labour problems. The party had its own political message to expound.

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1. S 9 Feb 1918, p.7, c.1

Labour believed that this message was a class message. The party in Christchurch was not consistently radical and certainly not consistently socialist. Nevertheless, it embodied the political consciousness of the working class of its day.

Labour's ideology may have been rudimentary and even contradictory, but it reflected the nature of the community which gave it birth. Its social conservatism, sympathy for prohibition and its ready acceptance of endorsement from the churches, all mirrored working-class values. Its political strategy was tailored to workers' aspirations. Commitment to constitutional methods and the peaceful transformation and uplift of society suited the desire of the working class for improvement within the status quo.

Nevertheless, four years of war had done much to sharpen workers' self-perception. It had driven home the class nature of society. Iniquities in the way the burdens of war had been apportioned were apparent to every worker. Each family had counted some cost in money or life. By the end of 1919, the working class in Christchurch had a sharper sense of identity and community than had existed for many years. However, it was a sense of identity born out of grievance, not hopelessness or despair. Workers were eager for the political battle of reform and improvement. This was also the rallying cry of Labour.

The party in Christchurch believed in 1919 that its support came from the working class. However, its definition of who belonged to the working class was broad. Sullivan declared that the party was out to serve the 'mass of the people, be they employed by others or self-employed.'[2] Ted Howard believed that Labour's support came from the 'useful people'[3] in the community - 'It had parsons, merchants, farmers,

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2. S 23 Aug 1919, p.5, c.1
3. LT 7 Nov 1919, p.7, c.7

master bakers and others'.[4] He was proud of the fact that the President of the Auckland Farmers' Union was the Labour candidate in the seat held by Bill Massey in 1919. Campaign leaflets explained that Labour was not dominated by 'artisans'; it numbered professionals and 'reverend gentlemen' among its organisers.[5]

Labour's interpretation of 'working class' was comprehensive, but it matched reality. It was a way of analysing and grouping the community that was meaningful to workers. In New Zealand, the working class was not a single monolithic strata of proletarians. In Christchurch in particular, it was a hierarchical and heterogeneous community of men and women who made their livelihoods in a multitude of different ways, but who nevertheless had come to define themselves as having a common political interest. They felt a certain solidarity in relation to the rest of the society.

It is sometimes assumed that international events or persons provided an essential stimulus for the evolution of class feeling in New Zealand and undoubtedly the influx of people and ideas from outside was important. The New Zealand Labour Party itself, was dominated by immigrants for at least the first twenty years of its existence. Christchurch was one of the few centres where the leadership was predominantly native-born. However, New Zealand society was not a passive thing; the impingement of people and ideas was important, but at the same time there was a vigorous colonial culture. Amongst working people in Christchurch and probably in other towns and cities, there was evolving a unique sense of working class identity, an indigenous form of class consciousness.

Workers had their own folk-heros, myths and legends. They had their own analysis of the political development of the country and of the

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4. LT 7 Nov 1919, p.7, c.7
5. Campaign Leaflet, 1919. Howard Papers, M.S. 980/75

way their interests had been served by those in power. This was more important in creating political solidarity and in determining the apportionment of political loyalty than anything European or British socialists could say.

Class is not a thing, it is a relationship embodied in a specific situation. Karl Marx himself, defined it as existing when people

> live under economic conditions of existence that separate their mode of life, their interests and their culture from those of other classes .... In so far as ... the identity of their interests begets no community, no national bond and no political organisation among them, they do not form a class .... [6]

In Christchurch, workers were to a perceptible degree indeed separated by their mode of life, interests and culture from other classes; by the end of the First World War, their sense of community had found political expression in the Labour Party.

As a social and cultural formation, as a relationship observable in the medium of time, class and class consciousness have a multitude of manifestations embodied in real people, in real situations.[7] The fact that the workers and the Labour Party of Christchurch looked to the Liberals and Liberal legislation of nineteenth century New Zealand rather than to the theories of Karl Marx and Fredrich Engels for inspiration in the creation of their political awareness and self-definition does not impair the class nature of that process and product; it shows only that indigenous Liberalism was more important than exotic socialism in its formation. Labour's success in 1919 might not demonstrate an upsurge of commitment to doctrinnaire socialism by the Christchurch working class, but

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6. David McLellan, op.cit., p.156

7. This follows the argument of E.P. Thompson. See E.P. Thompson The Making of the English Working Class, Penguin 1968, Preface and and Postscript.

that does not vitiate its essence as a phase of the class struggle.

DISCUSSION OF SOURCES

Demographic Structure

The demographic structure of Christchurch was established largely from primary sources, particularly the New Zealand Census 1911, 1916, 1921. The 1921 Census has a General Report which is a useful section since it contains some collated and retrospective data. There were problems with changes in the boundaries of areas and the type and methods of data collection however. Generally, published and unpublished demographic studies were macroscopic and technical. Geographers tended to be interested in trends and often expressed findings in mathematical relationships. This was of little use in establishing a static picture of one city at a point in time. However, John Stuart Duncan 'The Distribution of Population in North Canterbury', and L.D.B. Heenan 'The Changing South Island Maori Population' contained some useful material on population trends. Andrew Hill Clark The Invasion of New Zealand by People, Plants and Animals contained useful and easily accessible material on the changing nature and distribution of immigrants to Canterbury and other provinces.

Social Stratification

Allen Stanley Webster 'High status residential areas in Christchurch: structure and structural change 1878 to 1973' was the best source for establishing social and residential stratification in Christchurch. The study used both an objective occupational index and some subjective evidence drawn from advertising. Regional and suburban histories were used to fill out this structural picture. Joan Patricia Morrison The evolution of a city; the story of the growth of the city and suburbs of Christchurch, the capital of Canterbury in the years from 1850 to 1903, contained excellent material on the legislative, economic and industrial

development of Christchurch in the nineteenth century. Less academic works gave more information on the character and personalities in the different areas of the city. Johannes C. Andersen Old Christchurch contained the reminiscences of one familiar with the central part of the city. John Johnson The Story of Lyttelton, 1849-1949 had both factual and colourful material on Lyttelton. George William Walsh New Brighton; a regional history 1852-1970 was briefer but supplemented Morrison at some points. Sydenham was the only other work devoted specifically to a working-class area of Christchurch. It contained material on the social life and recreational pursuits of those who lived in the area as well as recounting its economic, industrial and legislative development. It was however, perhaps overly concerned to present a good picture of life in the borough. Gordon Bryant Ogilvie The Port Hills of Christchurch was excellent and contained good material on the development of Cashmere. Most of his field of study lay outside the area of urban Christchurch however. Sarah E.W. Penny Beyond the City was chaotically organised and not well written or printed. However, it contained an immense amount of information about the people and development of Riccarton and Fendalton impaired only by the chatty tone of admiration taken by the author. Anyone who doubts the existance of an upper class in Christchurch need only peruse this book.

Industrial Structure

The AJHR 1915, H-11, Labour Report contained a useful breakdown of industries, factories and wages in Christchurch on the eve of war. Unfortunately the same information was not given for the following years. The discussion in G.W. Clinkard 'Wages and Working Hours in New Zealand 1877-1919' New Zealand Official Year Book, was of some use, more particularly on the development of Arbitration Court policy during the war. Data on hours and wages allowed comparisons between cities and occupations,

for both sexes where appropriate. John Child 'Wages Policy and Wage Movements in New Zealand, 1914-1923' was the only study of wage trends for the period. He discussed the differences within and between industries as well as the movement of women into the workforce during the war. Stella Robinson 'Women in New Zealand. A Contribution to the History of the part played by Women in the Colonization and Development of the Dominion' was more useful as a primary source. Her comments on the contemporary scene illustrated the prevailing social attitudes to women in the workforce and the difference between theory and reality in labour legislation.

Party branch and Trade Union development.

Secondary sources deal mainly with national developments. Christchurch is mentioned only incidently. This is especially so since no Christchurch labour leader became pre-eminent within the NZLP. However, Barry Gustafson, The Advent of the New Zealand Labour Party, best charts the course of national events before and during the First World War. Bruce Brown, The Rise of Labour, gives the orthodox version of the formation of the Labour Party in 1916 as an inevitable development and is clear on the development of internal structure of the NZLP in the years immediately after. He does not give any regional perspective of events however. Pat O'Farrell, Harry Holland, is an account from Holland's viewpoint. This may say something about the labour movement in Wellington, where Holland was based for much of the war period, but it gives little insight into the thinking of Christchurch labour leaders. This is particularly true of his account of the formation of the NZLP.

In general, very little has been written on Christchurch. Valerie Smith, Gospel of Hope, is based primarily on Christchurch sources and contains much useful and interesting material. However, it deals mainly with the pre-war period. H.O. Roth deals with Harry Atkinson's activities

in 'The Labour Churches and New Zealand' and his account 'The New Zealand Socialist Party' puts the Christchurch branch of the NZSP into perspective within the national organisation. However, both the Socialist Party and the Socialist Church were small groups, and largely peripheral to labour developments. Roth's accounts are only partial ones. He deals with the radical and socialist aspects of Ted Howard's development, for instance, as if it were a complete picture. The records of the Socialist Party itself are only fragmentary, being merely a cash book, which does however give some idea of the size of the organisation, and miscellaneous correspondence. Neither these records, nor Roth's account, cover the war years. The same is true of Eveline Cunnington, Letters, which nevertheless contain a great deal of value, although they have been censored by her children for publication. Cunnington's is the only contemporary account of the activities of the middle-class socialist groups, the Fabians and the Church Socialist League. Noel Parsloe, Eveline Willett Cunnington and the Origins of the Canterbury WEA, contains some further material on the Church Socialist League in particular, since he culled information from contemporary newspaper accounts. However, Parsloe's first concern is adult workers' education and he passes over the political significance of some of the events.

Substantially, the picture of SDP and Labour Party development in Christchurch was constructed from primary sources, of which the Maoriland Worker was easily the best. The daily papers in Christchurch almost never mentioned local labour activities. The only exception was at election times, when the labour organisations themselves also advertised their activity and methods of organisation. However, several of the local party branches sent regular accounts of their activities and achievements to the Maoriland Worker. Each branch was supposed to have

an official correspondent for such duties, some were considerably more assiduous than others. John McCullough was regular in reporting for the Riccarton Branch, but other branches hardly ever sent in accounts of themselves. Their very existence was established in some cases only because they sent delegates to Annual Conference. Such personal idiosyncracies may have given an inflated impression of party activity in some areas of the town. However, the Woolston Branch of the SDP was sufficently famous and well-organised for its activities to be noted even by the national organiser of the SDP, Peter Fraser. A sufficently full picture of the social dimension of the political wing of the labour movement in Christchurch can therefore be established. Dan Sullivan's labour column in the Sun was also of some use, particularly as Sullivan was convinced of the need for more and better branch organisation. John McCullough's diaries contain some material on the inner functioning and development of the labour movement. His papers are as yet unorganised. The correspondence is unfiled and not yet ordered chronologically. The entries in the diaries span the war years and for the most part are regular. However, the bulk of them concern McCullough's activities as a Workers' Representative on the Arbitration Court. There is much more material on cases and travelling for court business than on his personal life or events in Christchurch. Ted Howard's papers were of little use for the war period.

The records of the local trade unions were of considerable value. The Trades and Labour Council, as the parent body, was most concerned with political developments. The minutes of both ordinary and executive meetings are handwritten but generally easy to read and follow. Some of the local unions were uninterested in political developments. The bulk of them did not even mention the formation of the NZLP in 1916. Alternatively their resolutions on the matter were so cryptic as to be

incomprehensible. Sullivan, Howard and Hiram Hunter were all leading political figures and the records of their unions were paid particular attention. Sullivan was secretary of the Furniture Workers' Union for only part of the war and even during this time the union did not monitor political events closely. The Tramway Workers' Union records were similarly preoccupied with local industrial problems and events. However, the minutes give a clear picture of a squabble within a union about joining national political and industrial structures. Tramwaymen in Christchurch were quite bitterly divided over the SDP, the UFL and later the Alliance of Labour. Howard's General Labourers' Union records were the best of any single local union. They were well presented; Mabel Howard was busy with a type-writer even then. Howard was a good union organiser. He made regular reports to the members, summing up the progress or decline of the union over previous months. He also gave accounts of the conferences to which he was sent as delegate. This gave some Christchurch perspective to national events. The records of the Lyttelton Waterside Workers' Union provided a clear example of the importance of a strong union in a small single-industry community. Furthermore, the ordinary and executive minutes gave a local dimension to the development of the Alliance of Labour, charted at the national level by H.O. Roth Trade Unions in New Zealand.

Conscription

Secondary sources gave some accounts of events at a national level, notably Barry Gustafson, Bruce Brown and Pat O'Farrell. These payed little attention to Christchurch developments however. The Lyttelton Times was used to establish the day-to-day narrative of the local agitation. This was supplemented with the comments of Sullivan and other labour leaders in the Sun labour column. McCullough made only intermittent entries in his diaries about conscription: he seemed to fear reprisal. The Christchurch City Council Minutes were of some limited use. Labour

representatives on the Council linked conscription and pensions for servicemen from the beginning in their public utterances and demands. However, the formal style and method of recording Council minutes substantially passes over or masks the intensity of debates that must at times have become very heated. The minutes were useful however, for following the voting patterns of both labour and anti-labour Councillors, thus detecting changes of sentiment and sympathy.

Trade union records were again useful. Those of the Trades and Labour Council were especially important as the TLC took the initiative in forming the Labour Representation Committee. The Trades and Labour Council scrapbook was especially interesting. Not only did it collect in one place newspaper cuttings from all the daily papers, but it thus showed what events were considered significant by the TLC. In this case, almost all the editorials of the conservative backlash from the conscription-repeal campaign of 1917 were collected.

The Repeal allowed thorough documentation of the pre-war agitation against compulsory military drill as waged by the Passive Resisters' Union. The papers of Charles Mackie were the major source on anti-militarist activity during the war. The papers are still in the state in which they left Mackie's hands. They are catalogued and numbered, but the notebook containing the key to his system has been lost. Nevertheless, they are comparatively easy to use. Mackie was very methodical. His Annual Reports of the National Peace Council allow the activities to be charted in detail from the time of its inception. Relations with the labour movement were not as easy to unravel. There was no formal connection until the formation of the Labour Representation Committee in 1917. After that point, the role of the anti-militarists as a pressure group within the political labour movement in Christchurch is clear. Much more material on the peace movement and its relations with the labour movement, is contained in the Lincoln Efford Papers, held by

the Alexander Turnbull Library. However, these are not as yet open to the public.

Prohibition

There is a considerable body of writing on prohibition in New Zealand. However, most of these deal with prohibition as a movement in its own right, or in its relations to the churches. Little has been written on the strength of the movement within the labour movement. James Cocker and James Malton Murray, Temperance and Prohibition in New Zealand, provide some incidental material. More particularly, the biographical section gives brief synopses of some individuals who happened to be prominent in both prohibition and the labour movement. Many are missed out however.

Writing which deals directly with the Labour Party tends to ignore or underestimate the influence of prohibition. Bruce Brown, The Rise of Labour gives the orthodox opinion on James McCombs in 1917. However, Brown is at least as misleading as he is revealing since both the pre-history of the incident and its wider implications are ignored.

Church publications were a major source for establishing the outlines of the prohibition movement during the war. For the Presbyterians and Methodists in particular, it was an area of special concern. They were thus much more interested in writing about its protagonists, both within and without the labour movement than were the daily newspapers. Nevertheless, the Christchurch papers did write up the issue in detail at the times when it came into especial public prominence: at the liquor polls, when important figures were brought to the city in Alliance publicity campaigns and when the Efficency Board reported in its favour.

The activity of individual labour figures could be detected from these accounts. Sullivan and other labour leaders also wrote about prohibition and endorsed it in the Sun labour column. However, the

rapprochment that came about between the labour movement and the churches was evident only from church publications. Although Methodism was very strong in Christchurch, and the Methodist Times was published in the city, it took less interest in the labour movement than the Dunedin based Presbyterian Outlook.

Cost of Living

Plentiful material was available in the Year Book 1914-1920, for documenting the rise in the cost of living in Christchurch during the war. Various indices were collected regularly for town and cities throughout New Zealand. These were supplemented for Christchurch by figures compiled intermittently by the Christchurch Labour movement itself. Barry Gustafson and G.W. Clinkard, 'Wages and Working Hours in New Zealand', concentrated on national trends, which was useful for establishing a perspective for local developments.

Secondary sources pay some attention to the influence of the cost of living on Labour's political fortune in 1919, notably Barry Gustafson and Bruce Brown. Very little has been written on Christchurch, or on the ways the SDP and Labour Party attempted to grapple with the problem during the war. This was established from primary sources. The labour column in the Sun was here of prime use. Sullivan conducted the column and regularly presented his own views. However, he also used it as a forum for debate. Other leading unionist and political figures wrote and argued in the column. The strength of the appeal of municipal and co-operative trading emerges strongly. The disagreements about guild socialism and the Whiteley Schemes were also evident here in a clearer form than elsewhere. In the records of the trade unions, the disagreements are obvious but unexplained: resolutions and counter-resolutions only.

Union records did however, make the state of discontent of the workers plain. Minutes are thick with resolutions condemning the government and calling for ameliorative action. The scrapbook of the

Trades and Labour Council was again useful in collating information, and showing through this selection the events that seemed of key importance to the labour leaders.

Parliament held a number of formal debates on the issue of the cost of living contained in full in the Parliamentary Debates. These were useful for establishing the discomfort of the Christchurch Liberals, sandwiched between their inactive Cabinet Ministers and their discontented constituents. James McCombs also provided a succinct history of the struggle of the Christchurch City Council to secure power to undertake municipal trading.

Education

The Minutes of the Board of Governors of the Christchurch Technical Institute cover in full the establishment of the Technical College and the intention of its founders. The labour movement was merely on the periphery of the initiative behind its organisation and the pronouncements of its spokesmen therefore do not feature in the Minutes. No attempt was made to directly trace the opinions of labour leaders in contemporary newspapers, instead a scrapbook of cuttings among the records of the Technical College was used. The Minute Books are easy to use, although still hand written throughout the war.

The magazines published for the Technical College, were livelier. They gave a vivid picture of both the school life of pupils and the intentions of the designers of the curricula. The Technical College Review summarised all the events and achievements at the college for some of the years that John Howell was Director. The single copy of The Hostel, the magazine of the girls' hostel, made very clear the kind of education thought suited to women.

R.W. Heath, 'Labour Politics and Education' contained valuable information on the Fabian Society, its interest in education and its

approaches to the moderate wing of the labour movement, particularly 'Professor' Walter Mills. Heath's Appendix gives the only easily accessible list of Fabian Society members and their occupations. However, Heath concentrates upon the evolution of policy within the NZLP. His attention turns to national leaders such as Peter Fraser and he does not explore the relationship between education and political consciousness that evolved in Christchurch. Eveline Cunnington, Letters is the best single source on this. Her correspondence details the operations of the Fabians, the Church Socialists and her own designs in promoting workers' education. Noel Parsloe, Eveline Willett Cunnington and the Origins of the Canterbury WEA, is also useful although his account is pre-occupied with establishing 'a founder' and in according that honour to Cunnington.

The Minutes of the District Council and the Joint Committee of the Canterbury WEA were only of limited use, being pre-occupied with the business of day-to-day organisation. The WEA scrapbook contained some miscellaneous items of value. Labour's motivation for its involvement in workers' education was more readily apparent in the writings of the labour leaders themselves: Sullivan in the Sun and Howard in the Maoriland Worker. S.M. Cook, 'Some aspects of the History of the WEA in Canterbury' contains an analysis of the membership, courses and purposes of the early WEA.

Ideology

An analysis of the idealogy of the Christchurch labour movement during the war was built up from fragmentary sources. Eveline Cunnington, Letters was excellent for the middle class socialists during the period immediately before the war. The book compiles not only her personal correspondence but her articles for local newspapers and the Maoriland Worker. She argued the case for socialism as the Fabians and the Church

Socialists saw it. As a leading feminist, her writings also provide a detailed picture of the kind of status and roles that the feminist movement of her day aspired to. The McCullough papers also contained one or two pamphlets from the period. 'The Archbishop and Socialism' and 'The Socialist Church' were most revealing of the underlying ideology of their writers - Cunnington and Harry Atkinson. Atkinson is also discussed by H.O. Roth in 'The Labour Churches and New Zealand'.

The evolution of thought within the Socialist Party is less well documented. Roth 'The New Zealand Socialist Party' contains some information on Christchurch and there is further incidental material in 'The October Revolution and New Zealand Labour', an account of the effect of the Russian Revolution on the national labour movement. Apart from that article, however, the bulk of this material concerns events before 1914. Indeed pre-war radicalism in Christchurch has received considerable attention. Tommy Taylor is dealt with in a rather disorganised fashion by Jessie Macleod The Fighting Man. G. Whitcher 'The New Liberals of 1905' is succinct on Taylor and the other New Liberals, several of whom came from Christchurch. R.K. Newman, 'Liberal Policy and the Left Wing' gives considerable personal detail about all the Liberal MPs who controlled Christchurch before the rise of Labour. All these writings contain some incidental material on the labour movement, but none study it in its own right. On the Christchurch labour movement during the war, there is nothing. Christchurch Labour leaders have attracted little attention, either as personalities or as theorists. Isabel Langford, 'Elizabeth Reid McCombs' deals with one who later rose to some prominence, but who was very much in the wings during the war. Bernard Kendrick 'Hubert Thomas Armstrong' does analyse the kind of socialism that inspired another local labour leader. However, this is also little use for the 1914-19 period. Armstrong did not settle in Christchurch until 1916 and was then promptly

removed from the political scene by his imprisonment for sedition. Moreover, both these theses are somewhat impaired by a degree of uncritical admiration for the personalities the authors have chosen to study.

On the three most powerful figures in the Christchurch labour movement during the war, Sullivan, Howard and McCombs, there are no secondary sources. Their ideology has been gleaned from primary sources. The Howard Papers were disappointing, and contained nothing of relevence for this period. Sullivan's thoughts were easier to trace through the regular columns of the Sun. For the most part, however, reports of campaign speeches have had to suffice. The pro-Liberal Lyttelton Times was used for the bulk of the material. Key speeches were checked against the accounts in the pro-Reform Press. It was hoped that this would obviate some degree of bias.

APPENDIX I

GRAPHS OF DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

EMPLOYMENT OF MALES, CHRISTCHURCH BOROUGHS, 1916

fig 1.1

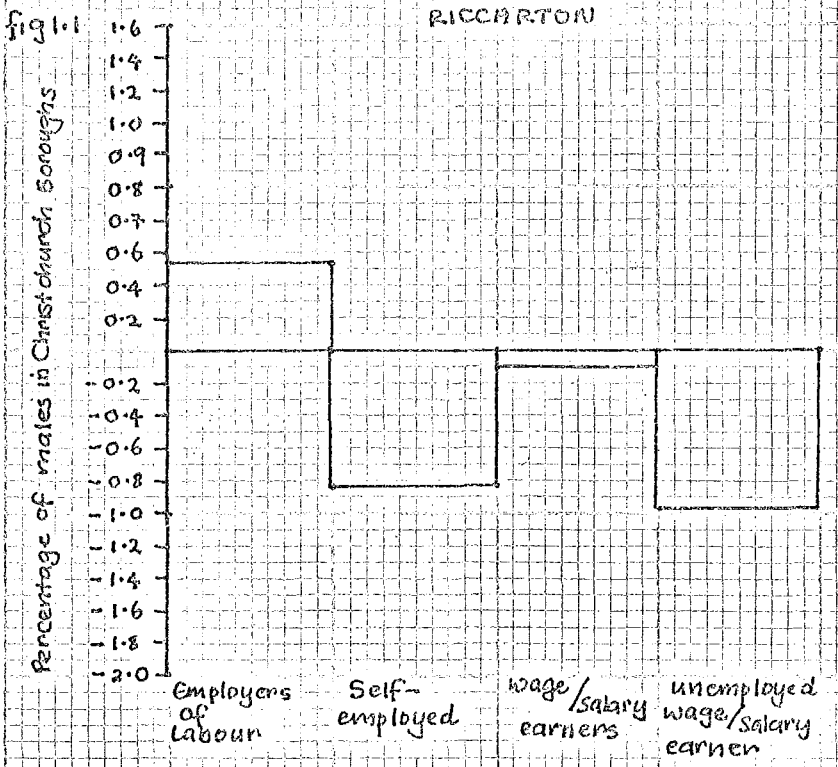


fig 1.2

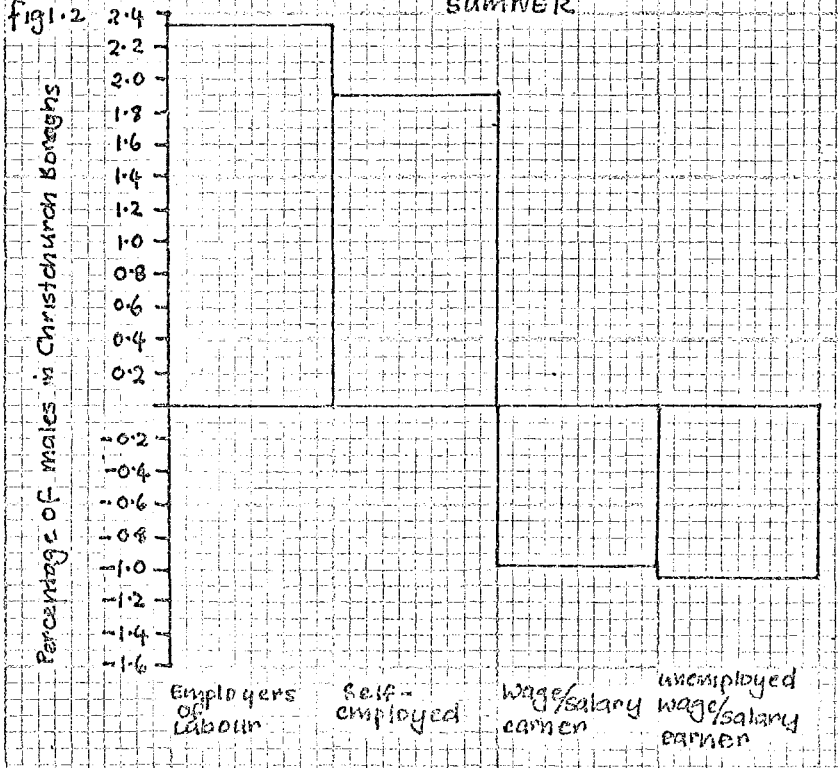


Fig 1·3

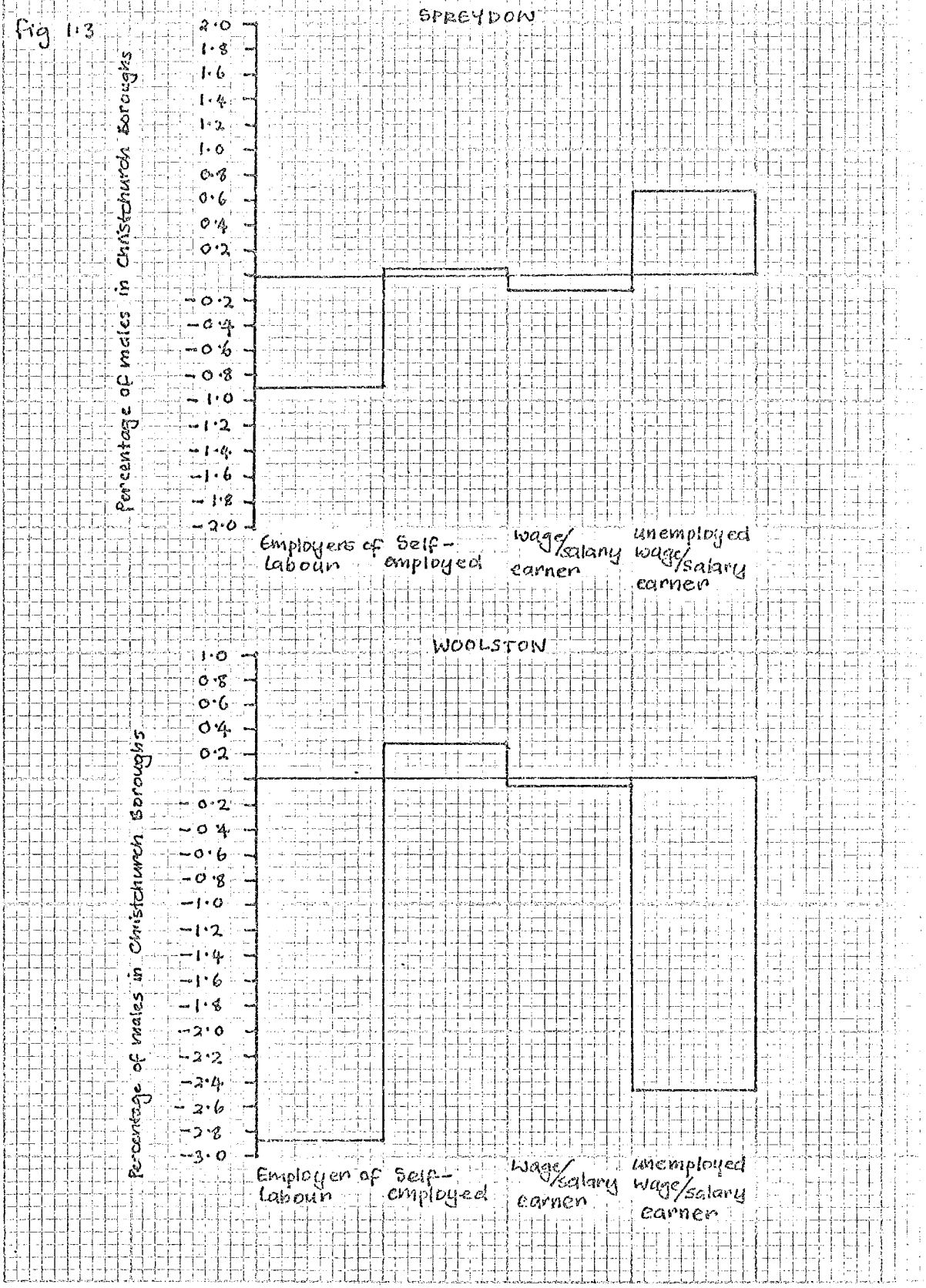
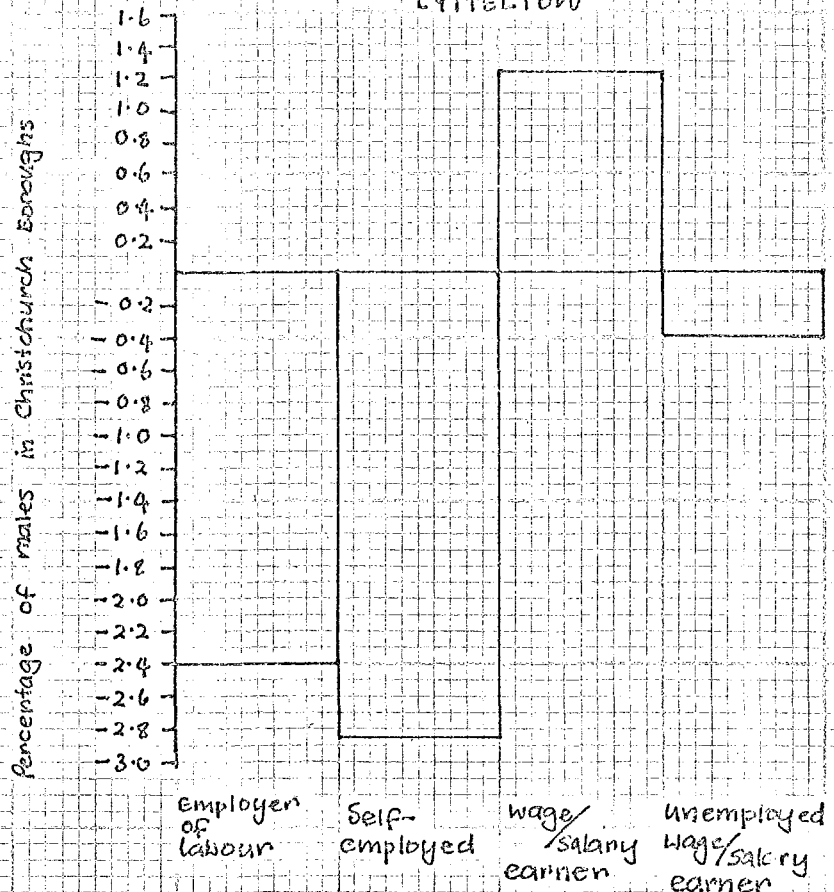

SPREYDON
Percentage of males in Christchurch Boroughs
2·0
1·8
1·6
1·4
1·2
1·0
0·8
0·6
0·4
0·2
-0·2
-0·4
-0·6
-0·8
-1·0
-1·2
-1·4
-1·6
-1·8
-2·0
Employers of Labour
Self-employed
Wage/salary earner
Unemployed wage/salary earner
WOOLSTON
Percentage of males in Christchurch Boroughs
1·0
0·8
0·6
0·4
0·2
-0·2
-0·4
-0·6
-0·8
-1·0
-1·2
-1·4
-1·6
-1·8
-2·0
-2·2
-2·4
-2·6
-2·8
-3·0
Employer of Labour
Self-employed
Wage/salary earner
Unemployed wage/salary earner

fig 1.5


LYTTELTON
Percentage of males in Christchurch Boroughs
1·6
1·4
1·2
1·0
0·8
0·6
0·4
0·2
-0·2
-0·4
-0·6
-0·8
-1·0
-1·2
-1·4
-1·6
-1·8
-2·0
-2·2
-2·4
-2·6
-2·8
-3·0
employer of labour
Self-employed
wage/salary earner
unemployed wage/salary earner

EDUCATION LEVELS, CHRISTCHURCH BOROUGHS, 1916

Fig 2.1

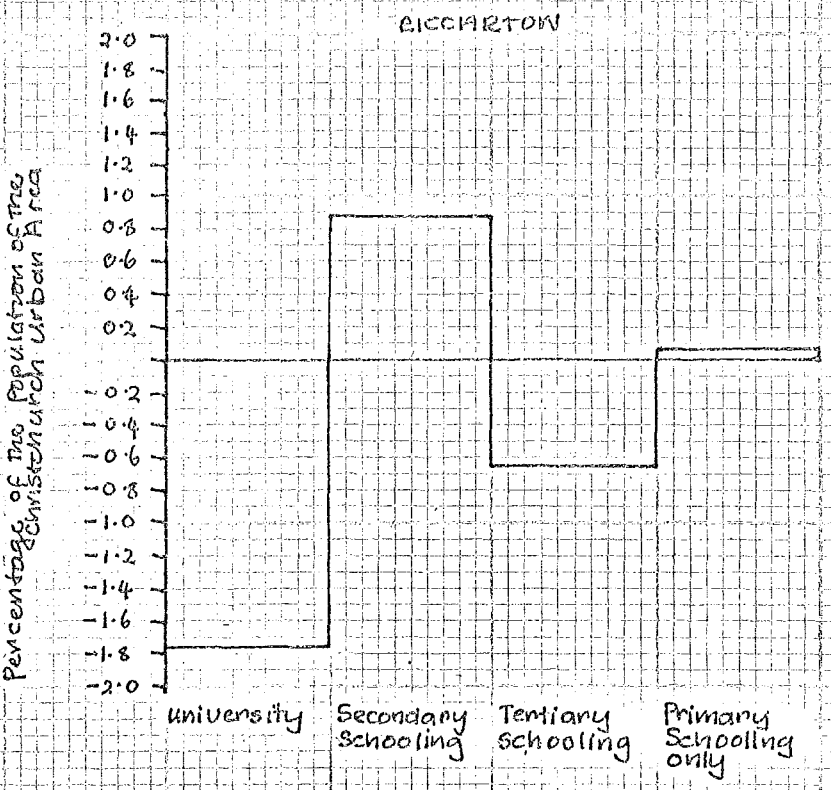


Fig 2.2

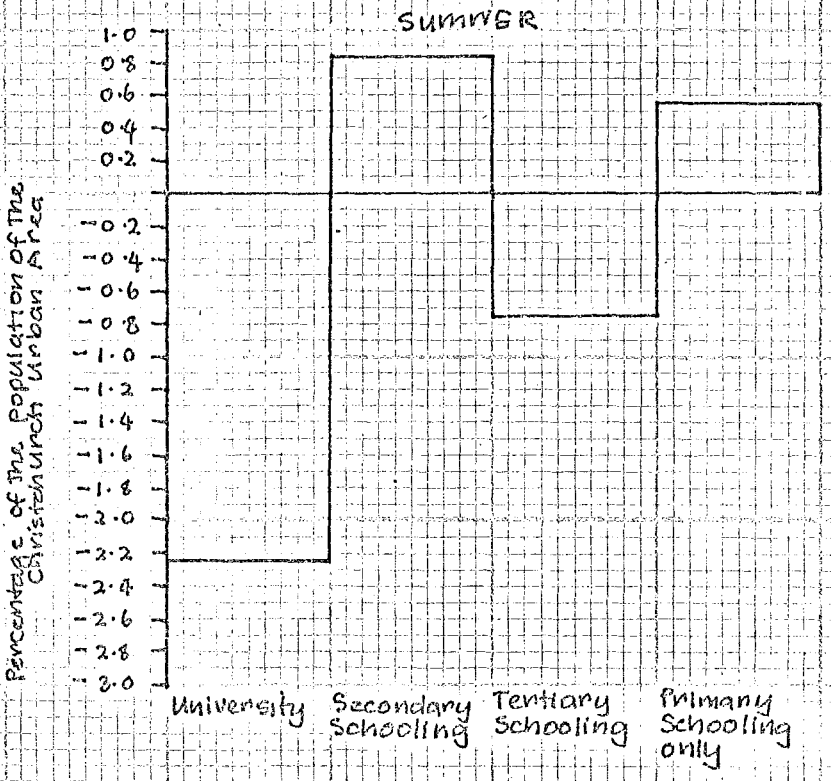


Fig 3.3

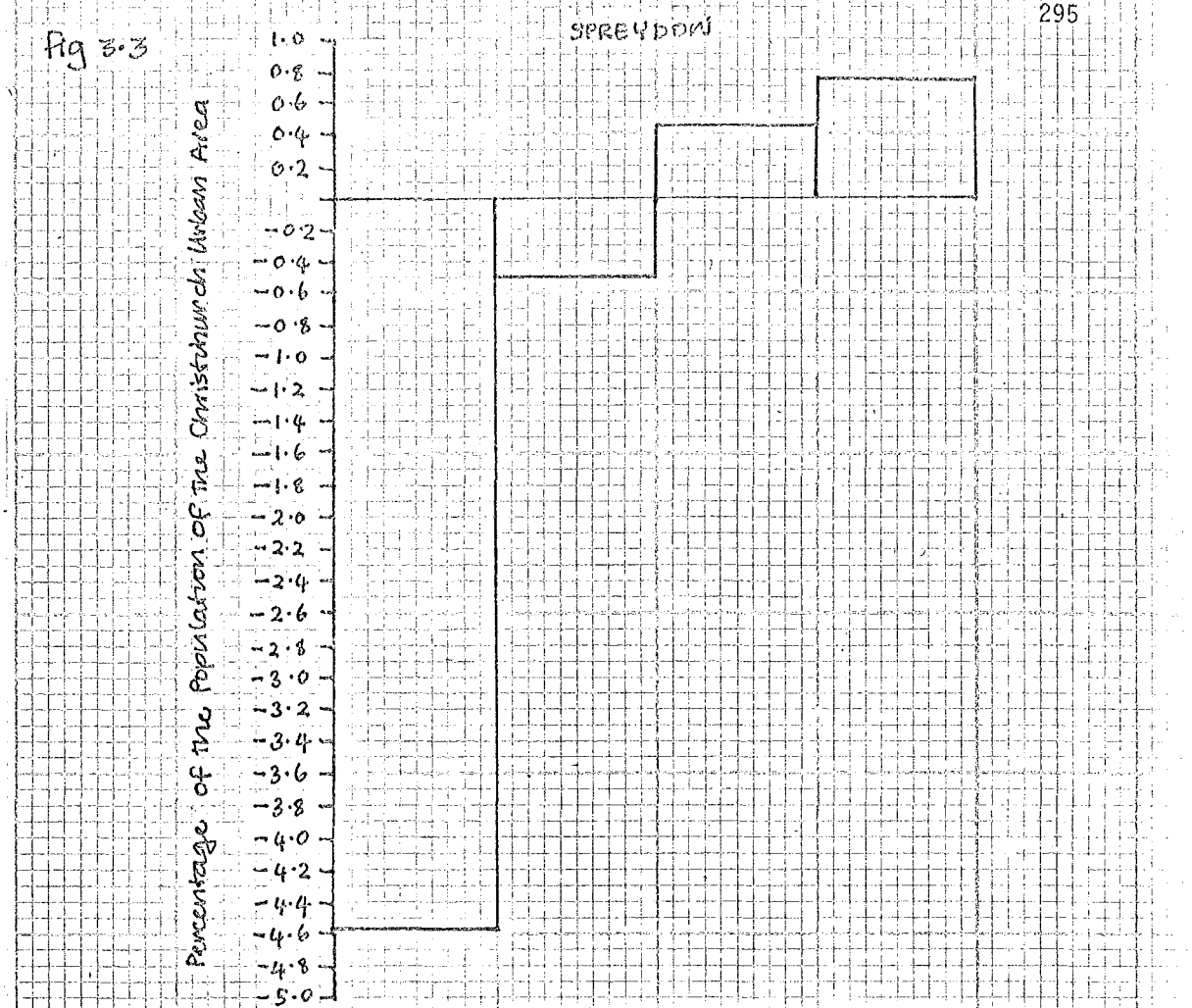
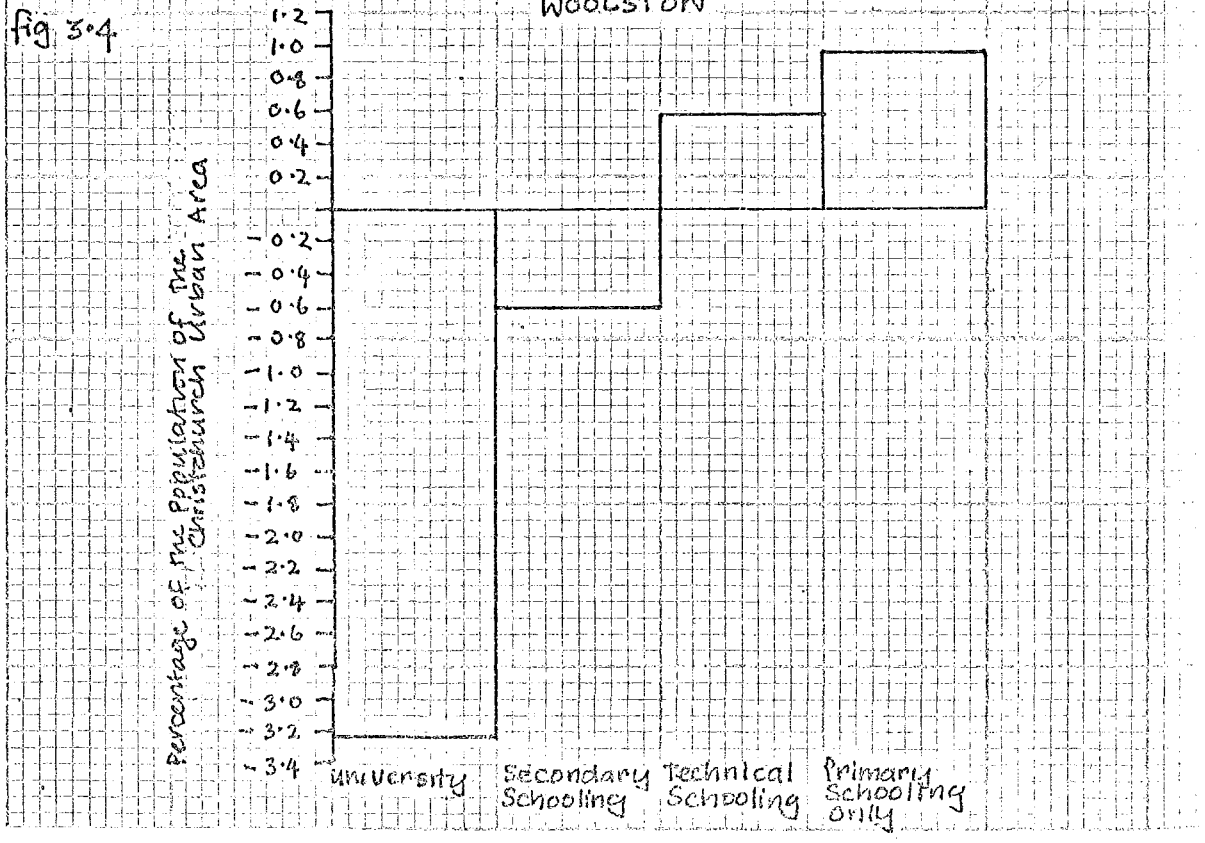

SPREYDON
Percentage of the Population of the Christchurch Urban Area
1.0
0.8
0.6
0.4
0.2
-0.2
-0.4
-0.6
-0.8
-1.0
-1.2
-1.4
-1.6
-1.8
-2.0
-2.2
-2.4
-2.6
-2.8
-3.0
-3.2
-3.4
-3.6
-3.8
-4.0
-4.2
-4.4
-4.6
-4.8
-5.0
University
Secondary Schooling
Technical Schooling
Primary Schooling only

Fig 3.4


WOOLSTON
Percentage of the Population of the Christchurch Urban Area
1.2
1.0
0.8
0.6
0.4
0.2
-0.2
-0.4
-0.6
-0.8
-1.0
-1.2
-1.4
-1.6
-1.8
-2.0
-2.2
-2.4
-2.6
-2.8
-3.0
-3.2
-3.4
University
Secondary Schooling
Technical Schooling
Primary Schooling only

BIRTH PLACES, 1916

Fig 3.1

CHRISTCHURCH

Proportion of New Zealand Urban Population living in Christchurch

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

New Zealand | Australia | England | Wales | Scotland | Ireland

Fig 3.2

DUNEDIN

Proportion of New Zealand Urban Population living in Dunedin

11 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

New Zealand | Australia | England | Wales | Scotland | Ireland

fig 3.3

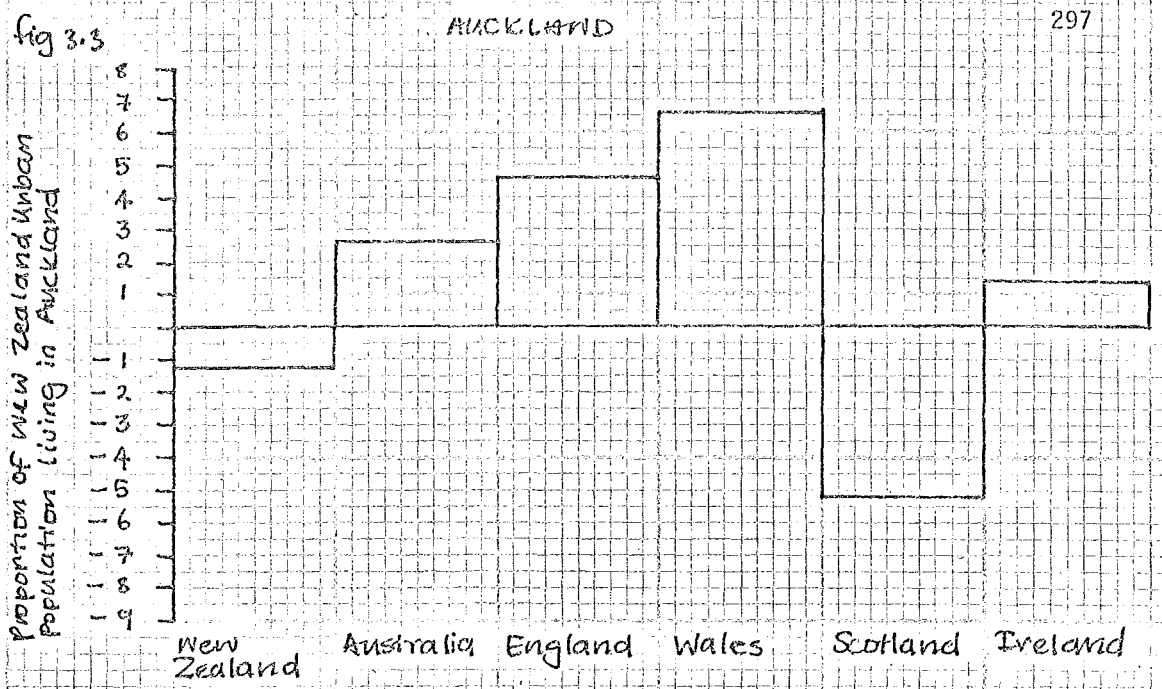
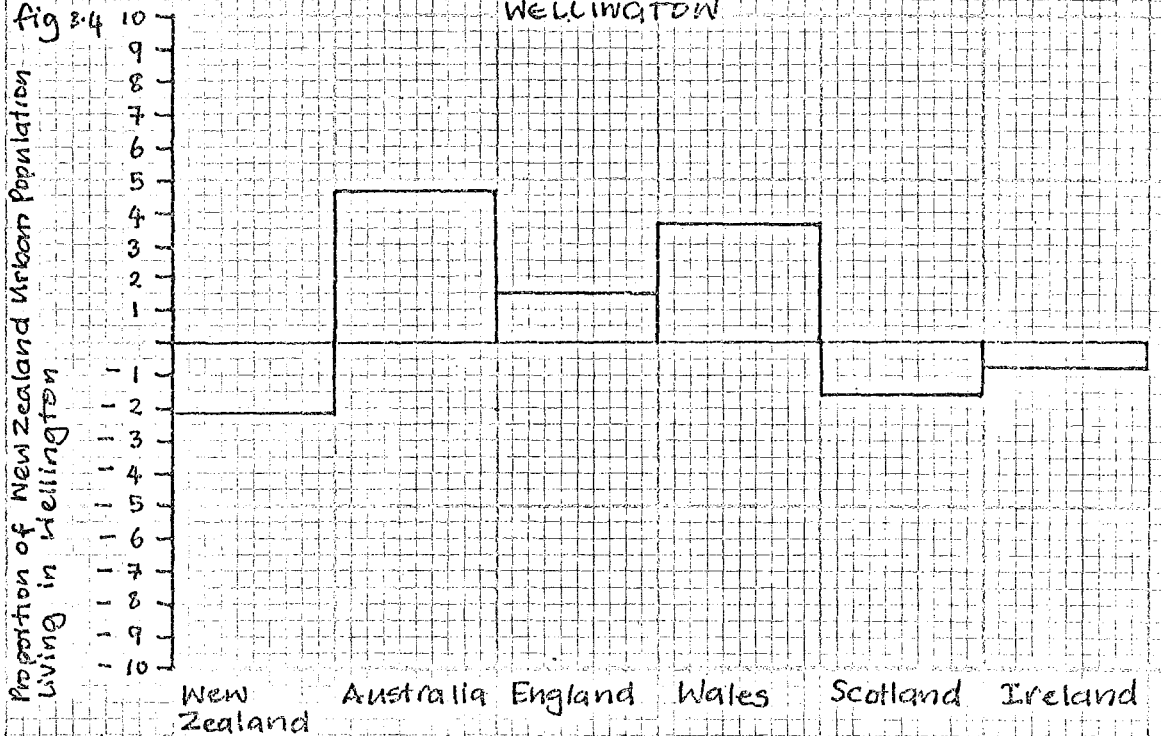

AUCKLAND
Proportion of New Zealand Urban Population living in Auckland
8
7
6
5
4
3
2
1
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
New Zealand
Australia
England
Wales
Scotland
Ireland

fig 3.4


WELLINGTON
Proportion of New Zealand Urban Population living in Wellington
10
9
8
7
6
5
4
3
2
1
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
New Zealand
Australia
England
Wales
Scotland
Ireland

AGE STRUCTURE, 1916

fig 4·1

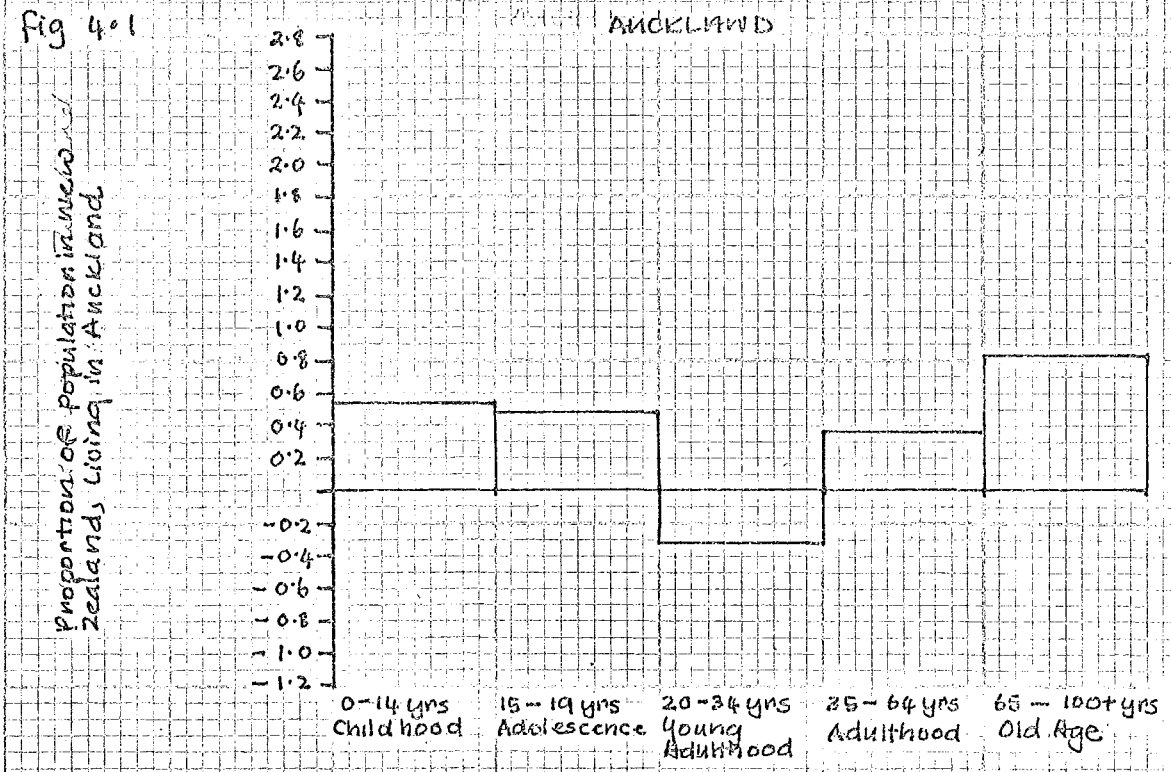


fig 4·2

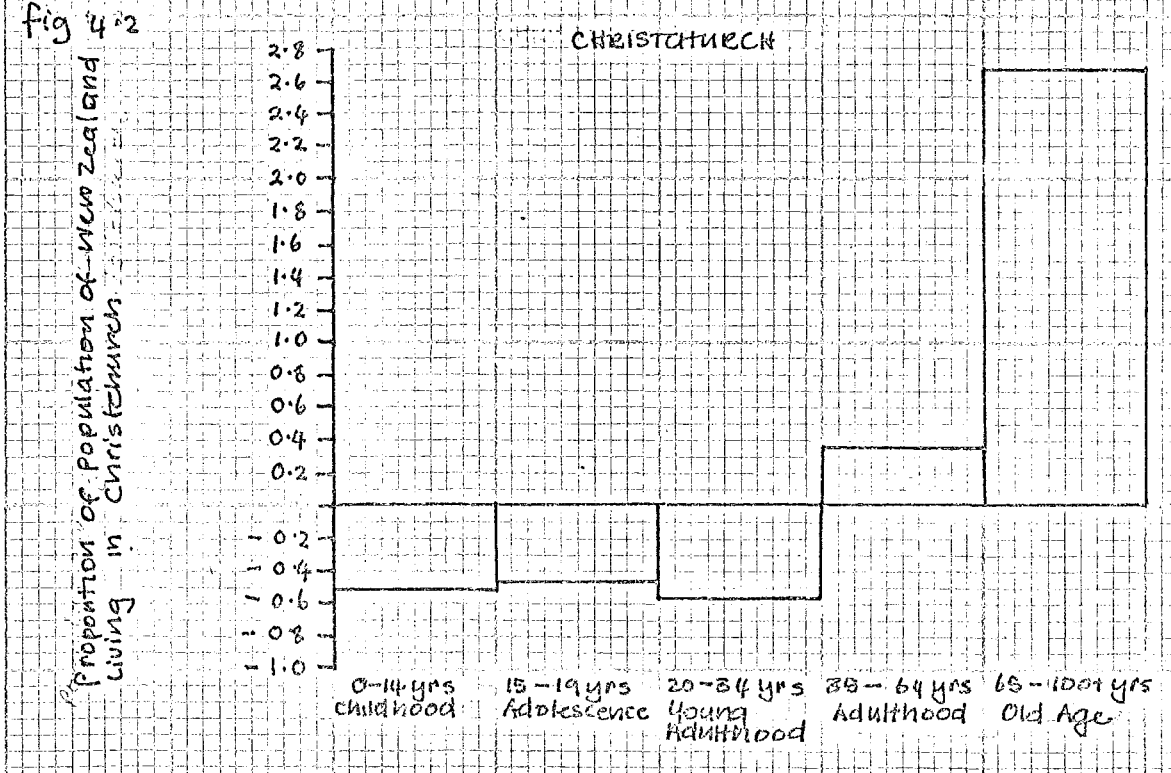
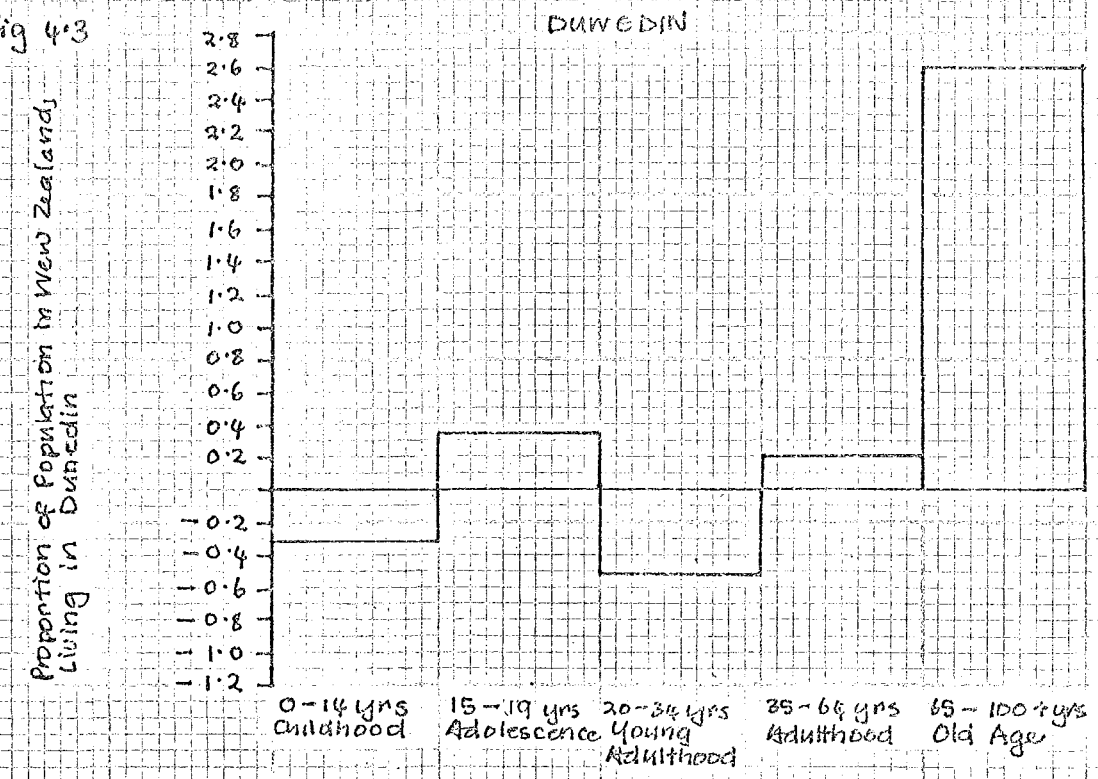


Fig 4·3


DUNEDIN
Proportion of Population in New Zealand Living in Dunedin
2·8
2·6
2·4
2·2
2·0
1·8
1·6
1·4
1·2
1·0
0·8
0·6
0·4
0·2
−0·2
−0·4
−0·6
−0·8
−1·0
−1·2
0–14 yrs Childhood
15–19 yrs Adolescence
20–34 yrs Young Adulthood
35–64 yrs Adulthood
65–100+ yrs Old Age

APPENDIX II

COMPUTER RESULTS

SPEARMAN RANK ORDER CORRELATION,

CHRISTCHURCH ELECTORATES, 1914 - 1919

(A) Electorates, 1914			Voting National Prohibition with		
			SDP/Labour	Reform	Liberal
I	02	Christchurch East (Hiram Hunter, S.D.P.)	0.6659 N = 14 sig = .005	0.3187 N = 14 sig = .133	-0.9385 N = 14 sig = .001
II	03	Christchurch South (G.R. Whiting Labour)	0.4545 N = 12 sig = .069	-0.3916 N = 12 sig = .104	-0.1049 N = 12 sig = .373
III	05	Avon (D.G. Sullivan S.D.P.)	0.4907 N = 22 sig = .010	0.0344 N = 22 sig = .440	-0.5607 N = 22 sig = .003
IV	06	Lyttelton (J. McCombs S.D.P.)	0.3737 N = 19 sig = .058	-0.3737 N = 19 sig - .058	
V	For Electorates 02, 03, 05, 06		0.3496 N = 67 sig = .002	-0.0405 N = 67 sig = .372	-0.3782 N = 48 sig = .004

(B) Electorates, 1919			Labour	Reform	Liberal
I	01	Christchurch North (H.T. Armstrong Labour)	-0.1813 N = 13 sig = .277		0.1813 N = 13 sig = .277
II	02	Christchurch East (Hiram Hunter, Labour)	-0.1201 N = 17 sig = .323		0.1201 N = 17 sig = .323
III	03	Christchurch South (E.J. Howard Labour)	0.2353 N = 16 sig = .190		-0.2353 N = 16 sig = .190
IV	04	Riccarton (J. Robertson Labour)	-0.1515 N = 30 sig = .212	0.4024 N = 30 sig = .014	-0.3691 N = 30 sig = .022
V	05	Avon (D.G. Sullivan Labour)	-0.2322 N = 23 sig = .143	0.0494 N = 23 sig = .411	0.2777 N = 23 sig = .100
VI	06	Lyttelton (J. McCombs Labour)	0.0566 N = 24 sig = .396	0.1013 N = 24 sig = .319	-0.4322 N = 24 sig = .017

(B) Electorates, 1919 (cont'd)		Labour	Reform	Liberal
VII	07 Kaiapoi (C. Morgan Williams, Labour)	-0.0931 N = 31 sig = .309	0.1060 N = 31 sig = .285	0.0030 N = 31 sig = .494
VIII	For Electorates 01, 02, 03, 04, 05, 06, 07	0.0756 N = 154 sig = .176	-0.0511 N = 107 sig = .301	0.0090 N = 154 sig = .452
IX	1919 Christchurch Electorates that had no S.D.P./Labour candidates in 1914	-0.0379 N = 74 sig = .374	0.2522 N = 60 sig = .026	0.0854 N = 74 sig = .235
X	1919 Christchurch Electorates that had S.D.P./Labour candidates in 1914	0.1428 N = 80 sig = .108	-0.1695 N = 47 sig = .127	-0.0598 N = 80 sig = .299

Appendix II : Computer Program

A Spearman's Rank Order Correlation was carried out on polling booth results from Christchurch Electorates with labour candidates in 1914 and 1919. For each polling booth, the number of votes cast for each party was converted into a percentage of the total number of votes cast in that booth. In the same way, votes for prohibition, state control and continuance were converted into percentages. The analysis was then carried out on the data in this form.

There were some problems. Voters were not presented with the same alternates in the referenda of 1914 and 1919. In 1914 there were both local no-license and national prohibition options; in 1919 local no-license was abolished but state control was added to the ballot paper. In some electorates the number of polling booths was very small and the level of significance of some of the results was therefore low. This has to be borne in mind in interpreting the results.

In Christchurch in 1914, there was a positive correlation between

voting prohibition, and voting Labour.[1] All the S.D.P. candidates supported the policy of a bare majority decision in a liquor referendum, a position endorsed by prohibition organisations. The correlation between labour and prohibition was strongest in those electorates[2] where labour faced Liberal opponents who were known anti-prohibitionists[3] and this suggests that prohibition was a vote-catcher for labour only when there was a real polarisation between the candidates on the issue. There was no significant correlation in Lyttelton,[4] yet James McCombs was the most widely-known and the most important of labour's prohibition champions.

In no electorate was the attitude of the Reform candidate of importance. Reform was not a strong party in the city and in many booths candidates received very few votes indeed.

By 1919, the relationship between voting Labour and prohibition had vanished. In no Christchurch electorate was there a significant correlation. This was a marked change from the situation in Avon and Christchurch East in 1914. Where there had been such a strong identification between labour and prohibition, there was now a small negative correlation.[5]

However, there was some evidence of an overall 'hangover' effect. The correlation was higher in those electorates that had been contested by labour in 1914 than in the newly contested electorates.[6] Some electors may still have been swayed by the memory of the situation of 1914.

In general, the evidence supports the contention that the Labour Party had decided to put the liquor issue behind them by the 1919 general

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1. See Results (A) V
2. Avon and Christchurch East; see (A) III and (A) I
3. The Liberals were G.W. Russell, Avon, Dr. H.T. Thacker, Christchurch East
4. See Results (A) IV
5. See Results (B) IV, (B) II
6. See Results (B) IX cf. (B) X

election. They no longer gave it space in their electioneering and generally Labour voters do not seem to have been influenced by the issue. Other matters were now more important.

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ABBREVIATIONS

LRC	Labour Representation Committee
NZLP	New Zealand Labour Party
NZSP	New Zealand Socialist Party
SDP	Social Democratic Party
Trade Unions:	
Carpenters and Joiners	New Zealand Carpenters and Joiners, Christchurch Branch
Furniture Workers	Canterbury Furniture and Related Trades Industrial Union of Workers
General Labourers	Canterbury General and Builders Labourers and Related Workers Industrial Union of Workers
Iron and Brass Moulders	Christchurch Iron and Brass Moulders Industrial Union of Workers
Plumbers	New Zealand Plumbers' Union, Christchurch Branch
Tailoresses and Pressers	Christchurch Tailoresses' and Pressers' Union
TLC	Canterbury Trades and Labour Council (Canterbury Branch of the Federation of Labour)
Tramway Workers	New Zealand Tramway Workers' Union, Christchurch Branch
UFL	United Federation of Labour
ULP	United Labour Party
WEA	Workers' Education Association
AJHR	Appendix to the Journal of the House of Representatives
CIA	Canterbury Industrial Association
CCC	Christchurch City Council
LT	Lyttelton Times

MW	Maoriland Worker
P	Press
PD	New Zealand Parliamentary Debates
S	Sun